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THE POET'S DICTIONARY

I

IN every art or craft down to the humblest we instinctively figure the procedure as a struggle with something that is not ourselves: with some kind of 'matter' that resists in different ways and with varying tenacity. The desired product has to be presented to one or more of the senses as the mind has seen it; the vision has to be expressed, and expression means communication. Still, I agree with Professor Alexander[1] that the artist 'does not, in general, first form an image (if he be a poet, say) of what he wants to express, but finds out what he wanted to express by expressing it'.

This is more especially true of the art of words; and in the present essay I shall keep to poetry, and for the most part to high or serious poetry. The resistance of words is not like that of stone or wood. The shaper of an oar or of a boomerang must have a clear mental picture of the thing before he sets to work. Formally speaking, his task is one of subtraction; guided by the pattern in his head, he cuts away part of the wood, which resists him according to its own law. The material is dead. But words are 'not absolutely dead things'; words have a stubborn life of their own. They are irreducible; they have been shaped, for the most part unawares, by a million dead and living artificers; and they put up a stiffer resistance than a block. On the other hand, they have begun to do our work for us already—if only we can find them. But where, then, are they?

The carver can hardly escape the fancy that his oar is really, and not only potentially, *in* the block, and that he is merely, as it were, unpacking it. So, too, the poet is sure that the *mot unique*, which will tell him what he is trying to mean, exists somewhere, and that he has only to find it, or

[1] *Artistic Creation and Cosmic Creation*. p. 8 (*Proceedings of British Academy*, 1928).

(in a 'wise passiveness') to wait for it. This may be an illusion; there may be no such word; and, if so, there is something wrong with his half-formed conception. But if it does exist, then it is in 'the back of his head', that is, in the disorderly stores of his mental dictionary. These stores are much smaller, and for artistic purposes more select, than the contents of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. But externally, they all are, or ought to be, in that treasure-house. How much smaller is the poet's stock, and on what principle is it selected? What *kinds* of word, to be found in the *O.E.D.*, offer him most resistance, and in what varying degrees? Well, the *O.E.D.* itself offers certain clues; but as the theme is an endless one I can only suggest headings.

II

In the preface to the *Dictionary* there is a star-shaped diagram (vol. i, p. xvi), made to represent the stable and the changing elements in the language. In the midst is *lingua communis*, the body of words in general use, the 'nucleus or central mass of many thousand words whose "Anglicity" is unquestioned'. Above is the term 'literary', and below is 'colloquial', sinking down into 'slang'. Various rays show the perpetual process by which words come into this common stock, and either stay there, or go out again into limbo more or less completely: foreign words, dialect words, scientific and technical words. There is no definite 'quota'; the immigrants take their chances of making a living.

This scheme may be filled up in order to indicate the resources, or temptations, of the poet. Keeping the central, or common language (1) with its upward and downward tendencies, and going clockwise from the top, we may specify the following groups: (2) Biblical words; (3) archaic; (4) 'poetic diction' in the narrower sense (with two subdivisions, (*a*) *kennings* and (*b*) compound words); (5) foreign words; (6) dialect; (7) slang and very homely words; (8) technical words; (9) scientific; and (10) philosophical (including some theological) terms, which bring us round the clock again into

the upper regions of language. It is plain that neighbouring groups run into one another, and that there are many cross lines; and, further, that some groups will resist the poet much more than others, and that for diverse reasons. His success, naturally, can only be judged by the event; defeat can seldom be predicted as a matter of course; and there are few taboos on *a priori* grounds. The present sketch must be severely limited, and certain vital matters must be ruled out. One of these is the *sound* of words (a great topic, of which one chapter would deal with the poetic use of discords). Every word, from the poet's point of view, has three aspects, which can be separated, if only for analysis: (*a*) the sound; (*b*) the definition, or intellectual content, which is given by the lexicographer; and (*c*) the associations, or *aura*, to which the poet and his hearers are alive. Turn, in the *O.E.D.*, or in Johnson, from the masterly definitions to the examples, and it is plain how little of (*c*) can be comprehended in (*b*). In the groups now to be noticed the *aura* is sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter; and the fainter it is the greater the resistance that the poet must experience.

III

Another limitation, which will at once provoke protest, must be observed here as far as possible. I shall keep mostly to *vocabulary*, or single words; and this, it will be truly said, is to miss out most of the poetry. All, of course, depends on their setting, on their metrical union into a poetic phrase. Like Browning's musician, the poet makes out of three sounds 'not a fourth sound, but a star'. Yet this very fact dispenses us from saying too much about no. 1, the central speech. For here *all*, or almost all, depends on the setting. We know what may be done with the commonest monosyllables:

> Long is the way
> And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.

Difficilis ascensus: this 'sentiment', as Addison would have called it, soars above the speaker and occasion and becomes a truth universal. It owes its power, in point of form, to the

commonness of the words; to the two grammatical inversions, the first of them enforced by a metrical inversion that comes late in the line and is thus doubly emphatic; to the doubled stress, also late, in 'leàds úp'; to the sudden addition, or sighed-out after-thought, 'and hard', coming after the line-pause; to the placing of 'Hell' and 'light', which bear all the weight. But this kind of dissection is beyond my text. Happily no amount of it can spoil, or so I believe, the effect. In any case the *lingua communis* leaves little to be said about vocabulary. The words taken singly (except 'Hell') would not much arrest attention.

It is otherwise with the remaining groups, 2–10. Most of these are like the 'aliens', each of them wearing his own dress, whom the citizens, says Aristotle, at once notice in their streets. This is the simile that he uses in the *Rhetoric* for 'strange' words. Here the common words, the citizens in their daily garb, provide the setting and the contrast. The effect depends upon the strangers being able to make good their presence; contrast must end in harmony. Poetry, of course, is sown all over with the failures, with experiments that startle and leave us cold; but I will touch rather on the successes.

IV

(2) *Biblical* and kindred words. Of these, for similar reasons, there will be less to say. They are the fine flower of the 'common' speech, and therefore few of them, by themselves, are specially arresting, except those which have an exclusively sacred association. It is rather their sustained use that gives character to a style. The words that stand out, taken singly, are either suggestive of doctrine (*oblation, sanctify, elect* (noun), and *atonement*); or, like *predestination* (which is not in the Bible), they belong to group 10, or, like *manna*, they are now in metaphorical use, but easily suggest the Hebrew story. Or, again, they are practically out of use and have to be learnt (*ouches, cockatrice, wimple*). That is, if used at all, they are

(3) *Archaic* words. For these the poets have found their

chief storehouse in the glossary of Spenser. He, as we know, besides coining on his own account, also used dialect (No. 6). His followers, like Giles and Phineas Fletcher, took some of his vocabulary; and the later race of imitators did the same, so that his language in their hands was a *revived* archaism. In the *Castle of Indolence*, with its 'soft-embodied fays' and 'with all these sounds y-blent', it is often as beautiful and successful as with Spenser himself. But here, and with other Spenserians like Croxall and Shenstone and William Thompson, who also did well, the virtue lies less in the single words, in 'beautiful things made new', than in the general tint of the language and in the echoed music. Spenser himself has the good word of great poets and of all readers for his invention; his 'no language' has, I have remarked elsewhere, more poetic life in it than any of the actual dialects of England. The felicity of his old-new words needs no praise; but his moderation in the use of them is less often noticed. In a catalogue they seem numerous; but they do not, in fact, bulk very large in the mass of his verse, at least after the date of the *Shepherd's Calendar*. Spelling apart, and not counting the slight twist given to certain inflexions, these strange words are like an occasional gleam of gold or purple in the pattern; or like precious or semi-precious stones sparkling here and there from the inlay of an Eastern tomb. Sometimes they come in a cluster; in descriptions of pageantry, armour, and dress Spenser is tempted to accumulate them. The effect is a new emphasis; and the loose, iterative style of the *Faerie Queene* is for the moment braced up. Belphoebe wears a silken *camus*, besprinkled with golden *aygulets*, and

> *Purfled* upon with many a golden *plight*.

On her brows sit many graces,

> Working *belgards*, and amorous *retrate*;

And she wears

> gilden *buskins* of costly cordwaine,
> All bard with golden *bendes*, which were *entayld*
> With curious *antickes*, and full faire *aumayld*.

It is the dress of a masquer; some of these words failed to stay, or to stay long, even in poetry; but the picture is none the worse for that. An instance, thoroughly Spenserian in tone, may be added from Thomas Hardy:

> A little chamber, then, with swan and dove
> Ranged thickly, and *engrailed* with rare device
> Of reds and purples, for a paradise.

The peculiar idiom of William Morris is to be found—apart, that is, from his perverse *Beowulf*—chiefly in his prose stories; and there, to my own ear, the effect is harmonious and delightful. The language, second nature to the writer, soon becomes so to the hearer. The case of Chatterton, with his many *pretended*, and often incongruous, archaisms, is a special one. To value them aright and to feel his genius, it is best to forget all philology and to use a bare glossary.

V

(4) '*Poetic diction*' in the restricted sense. It must be enough to refer to the special features found in (*a*) '*kennings*' and (*b*) compound terms. But these two can hardly be separated, seeing that the *kenning* is often a compound single word, though often a group of divided words. The Old Norse term for a circumlocutory word or phrase is a convenient one for many usages, all of the same genus. Such are the periphrases in Old Norse and Old English verse; in Milton and his imitators; in Pope and *his* imitators; and those in Tennyson. The 'swan-road', the 'All-wielder', 'Pale-neb' [vulture], the 'Sanctities of Heaven', the 'speckled fry' [trout], the 'chalice of the grapes of God', and the 'hard-grained Muses of the cube and square', all aim at rousing the fancy; they call a thing not by its name but in a manner which at once describes and half-conceals it. They are in the nature of easy riddles. The Old English *Riddles*, which are whole poems, are harder; but the principle is the same. In the Old Norse 'court poetry' *kennings* tend to become distressing enigmas, and are a mark of decline. In our eighteenth-

century jargon (the 'finny race', &c.) the poet's fancy is dead and he is following the line of *least* resistance—doing the easiest thing he can.[1] But *kennings*, of one sort or another, are deep in the very nature of poetry and of all impassioned speech. They can be designed for beauty and dignity; but then they must not be obscure, or the dignity is in danger. In Milton they are used majestically. John the Baptist is 'the great Proclaimer'; and there are the 'grand infernal Peers', with 'Hell's dread Emperor', their 'mighty Paramount'. But these are phrases, not single words. In Old English single compound words, as well as phrases, are of course inherent in the poetic language. Here I will only refer to Professor Wyld's paper on 'Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry',[2] where the analogies with eighteenth-century verse are brought out, and which throws so much light on the artistic problem; namely, on how far these expressions were, at the time of writing, and now are, *alive*. Many became mere formulae; but the total effect, beyond a doubt, is one of great beauty and expressiveness.

As for the compounds in our later poetry, they still await an equally instructive treatment; they are matter for a book. Naturally, they are most in favour with our concentrative poets, such as Gray, Keats, and Dante Rossetti; although from Shakespeare, too, especially in his tragedies, they seem to pour out spontaneously, when he is moved to be elemental and tremendous:

> You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
> Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts . . .

Of the slow studious writers, Rossetti seems to depend least on Miltonic or other tradition, and to experiment most freely. In one sonnet of the *House of Life* occur *cloud-control*, *moontrack*, *fire-tried* (vows), and *still-seated* (secret of the

[1] For a systematic account of this habit, and of others which I am not attempting to discuss (Latinism, personification, abstraction, &c.), see Dr. Thomas Quayle's work, *Poetic Diction* (in the eighteenth century), 1924).

[2] *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, 1925, vol. xi.

grove). The first and last of these are dubious; but Rossetti has many splendid examples, as in the line

The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of hope ;

and again:

Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies.

Such compounds as *sun-glimpses*, involving two weighted syllables together, make the rhythm slower and more solemn; and indeed this is the general effect of poetic compounds. So with Keats:

Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briers among.

And it follows that such forms encounter the check, offered everywhere in English, by knots of consonants: and this has either to be eluded, or justified by the purpose. In Keats's line, no doubt, the rush of the sibilants answers to the hiss of the wind.

(5) Little need be said of *foreign* words not yet acclimatized, which are too distracting to do much good in serious poetry. They chiefly befit middle verse of the humorous or ironical kind. Dryden took his risks in the pleasant line

To taste the *fraischeur* of the summer air.

But the word was not wanted and did not gain a footing. Thomas Hardy speaks of 'the formal-faced *cohue*', where 'mob', or 'throng', was not sufficiently contemptuous. But these terms, which give trouble to the lexicographers, have to be well installed in the language before they can serve the imagination aright.

VI

(6) *Dialect* words. Here is matter for another volume. Professor George Gordon[1] selects some twenty such words from Shakespeare, observing that 'most of them are rather forcible than pretty, and have more pith and village realism than poetry'. Not the least notable is the thunderous verb, in *King Lear*,

Gallow the very wanderers of the dark.

[1] *Shakespeare's English*, Tract no. xxix, *S. P. E.*, p. 269.

It means 'to terrify', and is chosen by the poet to terrify *us*. These aliens have a different franchise from Scots or Dorset or Lincolnshire words scattered in a regular dialect poem; or, as with Burns and Fergusson, in one written in the Northern variety of the national speech. Here, of course, the strangeness is greater for the Southern reader than for the Scot; but even the Scot has to learn the language. The Northern words, forms, and sounds, being mostly concerned with concrete things, have all the sap and colour of home-grown fruits, and are not properly 'strange' at all. Gentler effects are produced by Barnes; and the soft Dorset speech is used to perfection, though more sparsely, by Hardy with his *apple-blooth*, and *poppling brew*, and *leazes lone*.

VII

(7) We are now down near the foot of the clock, with *slang* and its congeners, which touch dialect on one side, and technical terms (no. 8) on the other. These last are trade-slang, or trade-dialect, and I pass on to them, as slang would introduce the large subject of what may be called frontier-verse, and the lower limits of the poetic vocabulary. Ugly, grotesque, or gross words, I will only remark, may be made clean and presentable, and lifted into poetry (as we see in Juvenal), by indignation. His satires, most people will agree, are poetry. *Mr. Sludge the Medium*, though it contains no one word that is 'taboo', is below the line, and there is only a scrap or two of poetry in it. We can only decide here by net impressions, and single words count for little.

(8) As to technical words, they are stubborn things, because the bare meaning is everything and is usually concrete and prosaic. The *aura* is not there already, and the poet has to make it. The thing can be done; M'Andrew has done it. His engine is to him a poem that illustrates the works of the Lord and the reign of law:

> From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O God.

This is poetry of a kind, and I will not quote instances where

the effect is overdone. Still, these effects are not normal in highly pitched verse.

Shakespeare's notorious use of law-terms in impassioned speech is harder to judge. They must have had more colour and feeling in them for *him* than we can detect; although, no doubt, they are one species of the 'quibbles' that Johnson condemned. Romeo's sentence,

> seal with a righteous kiss
> A dateless bargain to engrossing death

is a really bad quibble. And how many of the thousand lovers who have repeated the line

> My bonds in thee are all determinate

have been checked by the legal image? Probably very few. Shakespeare is like the Bible; we know him so well that we do not notice difficulties.

VIII

But such terms border on (9) *Scientific* vocabulary. Milton enlists more hard words of this kind than any other great English poet. Some of them check every reader, and have to be learned: *colure, cycle, epicycle, thwart, obliquities.* They belong to the extinct astronomy, with its astrological implications. These, indeed, survived it, and are now perceptible in 'lucky star' and such expressions: and horoscopes die hard. *Predominant* and *influence* remain as metaphors, or abstracts, with very little physical suggestion. They are a section of the very large class discussed by Miss Elizabeth Holmes in her article[1] on 'Milton's Use of Words'. The words in question, mostly of Latin origin, retained for Milton, and often for his contemporaries, an *aura* of their original, physical meanings: and this we must recover, if we are to appreciate them. He brought out, or brought back, their latent appeal to the senses. How Young, Thomson, and others echoed Milton in this matter and usually came to grief, is an old story. A different and very adroit use of technical and scientific terms

[1] *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, 1924, vol. x.

is found in Tennyson's *Princess*. He wrote at a moment when the common language was being enriched by the new science, in a degree not to be paralleled since Renaissance times. *Telegraph* and *parachute* and *catalepsy* still spoke to the fancy, and Tennyson scatters them in his fanciful verse. Geology, too, was coming home to the popular mind: and he picks out, for the sake of their sound and strangeness,

rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte.

IX

(10) *Philosophical* and kindred words. As we know, some of the masters, Plato and Berkeley and Hume (being also men of letters), can write, and often do write, with very little stiff terminology. They are all the more elusive, perhaps, for that reason: but they make everything seem easy. The poets who try to expound abstract ideas and to inlay scholastic terms meet with a very palpable resistance from language. Many such terms, of course, have no association with the senses, or fringe of imagery. The *-ologies* are out of the question, like *logic* and *ethics*. Has the noun *complex* yet reared its horrid head in a modern lyric? Probably. It belongs to our No. 7, slang. But there are poets who can philosophize without danger. Spenser, in his *Hymn of Love*, and *Hymn of Beauty*, steers his bark wonderfully; and even in his 'trinal triplicities on high' (the nine orders of subordinate heavenly beings) he does not go aground. But the great performer in this region is Lucretius; and he is the harder pressed, because he is expounding physics, where the terms have strict senses and sharp edges: *plenum, inane, primordia rerum*. How Lucretius, when he is stirred, can make these words glow, needs no description. One of his greatest effects is produced by a word from the Greek, which the poverty of Latin, so he tells us, forces him to borrow although the meaning is easy to explain. It is the theory that every object consists of tiny particles of its own shape and kind:

Nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur *homoeomerian*.

Theological terms often have a very rigid sense: *essence, attribute, necessity, foreknowledge, coeternal.* But they can serve poetry, because their associations, religious, historical, and imaginative are manifold. The Athanasian Creed has made some of them familiar. Milton does not shrink from them, and is often nobly justified. Light is

Bright *effluence* of bright *essence increate*;

and the line

Fixed fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute

is an example of great poetry that is wholly destitute of imagery and lives on its intellectual evocations. Yet, as though Milton felt the danger, in the next line he brings the idea down to earth—perhaps to the Cretan labyrinth?

And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

Another of these tough words is *predestination.* Magnificent in sound, and sinister in meaning, it is nevertheless hard to animate in verse. Milton, in one of his dogmatic passages, hardly succeeds:

As if predestination overruled
Their will, disposed by absolute decree
Or high foreknowledge.

But M'Andrew, I believe, succeeds once more, though it be by violence:

Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.

This, again, is a feat: it is verse, with a ring of poetry. On the whole, the English writers like Spenser, or his follower Sir John Davies in *Nosce Teipsum,* have prevailed rather by shunning than by challenging the diction of the schools.

X

Can we now grade these diverse groups of words in the measure of their reluctance to become poetical? Leaving out slang and the like, and also the half-English foreign importations, which scarcely count, the result seems to be this. Technical words are by no means quite intractable, but have

less *aura* than the rest. Scientific words, in the past at any rate, have had more, especially at the two great seasons of their immigration, the Renaissance and the age of Darwin. Some philosophical and theological terms, in spite of their stubborn intellectual content and natural bareness, have rich associations for the poet, if only he can partially submerge that content and make play with the undefined element. *Kennings* and single-word compounds are inherent in the poetic language; they often betray their date, and may easily be a bad symptom; but they are never far off, and at their best they may almost be poems in themselves—the shortest poems possible. Archaic words, though not thus inherent in poetic language, are triumphantly managed by a very few masters. Biblical words and the *lingua communis* generally, especially in its higher ranges, need offer no resistance at all; and depend, therefore, more than all the rest, on their neighbours, their order, and their metrical value. The poet, and perhaps every reader, may know all this without being told; but analysis never does any harm to our understanding, or to our enjoyment, of poetry.

OLIVER ELTON.

MARLOWE'S *TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS*[1]

IN March, 1581, a brilliant undergraduate went into residence at Benet College, Cambridge. He came up from the King's School, Canterbury, with a scholarship on the Parker foundation, which required the holder, on completing his University career, to enter the Church. He took his degree and kept his terms during the six years' tenure of the scholarship, and proceeded master of arts in 1587. Then just at the date when he should have rounded off this eminently respectable career with the style and title of 'the reverend Christopher Marlowe' and the prospect of a college living in later life, the authorities at Cambridge and at Canterbury must have heard with deep pain that their promising young scholar was following a very different lure and had decided that his gifts of literary expression would find freer scope on the stage than in the pulpit. He was producing a play called *Tamburlaine the Great*, original alike in form and in conception and destined to be much more than a contemporary success: it stands out for all time as one of the landmarks of English drama.

The type of character depicted in *Tamburlaine* recurs in *Doctor Faustus*, but in a text so corrupted and overlaid by the work of other writers, mere playhouse hacks, that in only a fragment of the whole can we trace with certainty the hand of Marlowe. We shall discern more clearly the scope and intention of *Doctor Faustus* if we glance for a moment at some characteristic features of the earlier play.

Tamburlaine is essentially the work of a young man, touched with a note of youthful idealism which he never

[1] A Lecture delivered before the Association in London on 9 December, 1924. For the textual problem raised in the course of the lecture, readers are referred to the writer's paper on the 1604 Quarto contributed to volume vii of the Association's *Essays and Studies*.

recaptured in his later writing; it has something of the heroic quality of Tamburlaine himself—

> Of stature tall and straightly fashioned,
> Like his desire, lift upwards and divine.[1]

Writing in this exalted mood, Marlowe gave a new turn to tragedy. He concentrated all his creative power on one towering and colossal figure, round which the other characters revolve like satellites in the orbit of a planet. The hero is the incarnation of unbridled power, pitiless in the quest of it and achieving his aim with superhuman energy, but idealized by the soaring imagination of the poet. Marlow varies the tones of his instrument, but the louder notes prevail. Yet always, whether expressed in gorgeous rhetoric or in pure poetry, the note of aspiration is sustained.

> Is it not passing brave to be a king,
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?[2]

And the clear, ringing music of that last line so caught the poet's ear that he repeated it as a refrain, making blank verse lyrical. It is followed by Tamburlaine's scornful question,

> Why then, Casane, should we wish for aught
> The world affords in greatest novelty
> And rest attemptless, faint, and destitute?[3]

Tamburlaine in this poetic mood even expounds the philosophy of ambition:

> Nature, that framed us of four elements
> Warring within our breast for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds.
> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Will us to wear ourselves and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.[4]

[1] *Tamburlaine*, Part I, ll. 461–2, in the Oxford edition of Marlowe by C. F. Tucker Brooke, which is quoted in future references.

[2] 758–9. [3] 777–9. [4] 869–80.

'Still climbing after knowledge infinite'—the words are noteworthy as anticipating the theme of *Doctor Faustus*, which probably followed closely on the second part of *Tamburlaine*; Marlowe seems half-consciously to be moving towards the conception of his second play. The quest of infinite knowledge is a new phase of ambition, and he gives it kindred treatment. There is little appreciable advance in dramatic method. Marlowe had not yet felt his way to a well-knit and coherent plot. All the action centres in a single character absorbed by a passion which consumes him. Both Tamburlaine and Faustus, it may be noted, are men of low origin. Tamburlaine is a shepherd:

> I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove,
> And yet a shepherd by my parentage.[1]

Of Faustus we are told at once in the prologue that his parents were 'base of stock'. High intellectual gifts and a boundless energy carry them to their goal. The conception is suggestive as coming from the son of a Canterbury shoemaker.

But if the method of the play of *Doctor Faustus* is unchanged, the material is better suited for dramatic handling. *Tamburlaine* throughout is rhetorical and spectacular; it is not so much a drama as a pageant—the triumphal pageant of ambition, impressive indeed by the sheer glory of the verse, but so monotonous in treatment that the two parts really make up a cumbrous ten-act play. In *Doctor Faustus* much of Marlowe's original writing has been pared down by successive playhouse editors in order to add to the clownery, but the main design is clear, it is boldly carried out, and the theme has great dramatic possibilities. The play is something more than a variant of the type depicted in *Tamburlaine*: it is not a mere study of ambition; it depicts the tragedy of a human soul, and in the closing scene it achieves this end with a strength and intensity as yet unknown in English drama.

It is this sense of the inner conflict which makes *Doctor*

[1] 230–1.

Faustus what the title-page of the early editions expressly calls it, a 'Tragical History'. Faustus is depicted in the opening scene among his books, turning them over irresolutely, undecided to what study to devote himself. When Valdes advises him to enter upon the study of necromancy, he notes that weakness ~~and~~ promises success on one condition—

If learned Faustus will be resolute.[1]

Faustus protests his resolution, but it is noticeable that, when his mind is made up and he enters to conjure after being instructed in the ritual, he has to reassure himself:

Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform.[2]

His spirit ebbs and flows like the tide. In the first flush of his success he utters the exultant cry,

Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.[3]

But when he has time to reflect, he is cowed with hopeless doubt:

Now, Faustus, must thou needs be damned,
And canst thou not be saved?
What boots it then to think of God or heaven?
Away with such vain fancies, and despair—
Despair in God, and trust in Belsabub.
Nay, go not backward: no, Faustus, be resolute.
Why waverest thou? O something soundeth in mine ears,
'Abjure this magic, turn to God again'.[4]

It is this anguish of uncertainty that strikes the note of tragedy in the play. It is a venture into an uncharted region which only Shakespeare was to explore thoroughly: these faint tracks of the pioneer point the way to *Hamlet*.

As the play proceeds, the struggle deepens in intensity.

When I behold the heavens, then I repent,[5]

Faustus exclaims at one moment, and at the next:

[1] *Dr. Faustus*, 162. [2] 248–9. [3] 338–9.
[4] 433–40. [5] 612.

My heart's so hardenèd I cannot repent:
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears
'Faustus, thou art damned'.[1]

The sensual baits with which Mephistophilis plies his victim are subtly graded; they give an element of artistic relief to the phases of suffering and despair. The first attempt is quite crude:—'Enter [Mephistophilis] with devils giving crowns and rich apparel to Faustus, and dance, and then depart'.[2] Something has been excised from the context—at least a speech of the presenter. Marlowe, with all the rich resources of blank verse at his command, did not dismiss a temptation with a dumb show and eke it out with a line or two of prose cut up into verse lengths.

'Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?'
'Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to show thee what magic can perform.'[3]

We are on firmer ground in the next temptation which depicts the thrill of intellectual pleasure.

Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?
And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp
Made music with my Mephistophilis?[4]

Next come the spectacle of the Seven Deadly Sins, significant in the choice of the performers, and the visit to Rome. And throughout, like a mournful undertone, come reminders of the approaching end:

Now, Mephistophilis, the restless course
That time doth run with calm and silent foot,
Shortening my days and thread of vital life,
Calls for the payment of my latest years.[5]

Then, as the climax of temptation and the final triumph of the Fiend, is the summoning up to earth of Helen of Troy. The rapture of the lost man finds utterance in some of the

[1] 629–32. [2] After 514. [3] 515–17.
[4] 637–41. [5] 1106–9.

most exquisite lines that ever came from the pen of Marlowe:

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burned the topless towers of Ilium? ....
> Oh thou art fairer than the evening air
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
> Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
> When he appeared to hapless Semele,
> More lovely than the monarch of the sky
> In wanton Arethusa's azured arms;
> And none but thou shalt be my paramour.[1]

Instantly this radiant vision fades, and he passes to the darkness of the end. The last scene reveals a flexibility of style, a capacity for varying the range of the instrument, for which we look in vain in the clanging verse of *Tamburlaine*. It is a noteworthy advance in poetic art. The scene opens significantly with a dialogue in prose. Very little of the prose which has come down to us as Marlowe's can be regarded as unquestionably his, but here at any rate I feel no hesitation, and the point is important in view of Shakespeare's practice later. Marlowe, reaching the crisis of his play, pitches the first note in this quiet key.[2] Faustus enters with three scholars, who had been students with him at Wittenberg; one of them a close intimate, who had been his chamber-fellow. Old memories stir within him at the sight of them and effect a startling change: the world magician, face to face with grim reality, becomes profoundly simple. He turns, as any common man would turn, to his fellow men for sympathy. 'Ah my sweet chamber-fellow! had I lived with thee, then had I lived still, but now I die, eternally: look, comes he not? Comes he not?' They try to comfort him: 'Tis but a surfeit—never fear, man.' 'A surfeit of deadly sin', he answers, 'that hath damned both body and soul.' He is advised to look up to heaven and trust God's infinite mercy. 'But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned. The serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus.' His mind then travels back to his past life and

[1] 1328-9, 1341-7. [2] 1359 ff.

the use which he has made of it. 'Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, oh, would I had never seen Wertenberg, never read book: and what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world, for which Faustus hath lost both Germany, and the world—yea, heaven itself,—heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy, and must remain in hell for ever,—hell, ah hell for ever? Sweet friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hell for ever?' 'Yet, Faustus, call on God.' 'On God, whom Faustus hath abjured,—on God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed! Ah, my God, I would weep, but the Devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears—yea, life and soul! Oh he stays my tongue, I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them!'

The prose is strong and vivid, and it is heightened by a plangent note which makes it a fit prelude for the verse which follows. Faustus is left alone, with but one hour to live, and the conflict of feeling within him shows itself now by a direct and simple line wrung from him by the imminent horror of the end, and again by a sudden flight of poetic fancy, the expression of his over-charged emotion:

> Ah Faustus,
> Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
> And then thou must be damned, perpetually.
> Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
> That time may cease, and midnight never come.

He prays that this final hour may be but

> A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
> That Faustus may repent, and save his soul.
> *O lente, lente currite noctis equi.*[1]

Here too his mind goes back to the past; he is quoting Ovid, the prayer of a lover in his mistress's arms that the horses of the chariot of the night may move slowly across the sky. There is a grim irony in the application of it here; it is the agonized cry of the sensualist who had claimed Helen for his paramour.

[1] 1426–8.

Dream quickly gives way to reality, and the verse vividly reflects the change. First, there is a line of monosyllables broken by quiet pauses; then the pent-up agony finds expression, in turbid and broken rhythms. Nowhere in the whole range of Marlowe's work is there a sharper contrast to the normal movement of his lines. The superb imaginative power of the passage further deepens its artistic significance. A mirage of blood—the blood of Christ, as Faustus supposes—flickers before his straining eyes:

> The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
> The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
> Oh I'll leap up to my God: who pulls me down?
> See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament:
> One drop would save my soul—half a drop—ah my Christ!
> Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ:
> Yet will I call on him—oh spare me, Lucifer![1]

There is a rapid change of vision. He sees God frowning angrily upon him; and now he quotes, not Ovid, but the Bible:

> Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me,
> And hide me from the heavy wrath of God.[2]

The half-hour strikes: spent with agony, he pleads for a respite; the voice dies away into a moan.

> Oh God,
> If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
> Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood hath ransomed me,
> Impose some end to my incessant pain.[3]

In this last interval his mind wanders off to a fanciful speculation about the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis. In our ears this has a hollow ring at such a moment; but we must remember that Faustus is a supreme embodiment of Renaissance feeling, and that in this point he faithfully reflects the spirit of his creator. He is pouring out the curses of despair when midnight strikes; and as the thunder peals and the lightning flashes around him, one last gleam of poetry lights up his dying utterance:

[1] 1429–35. [2] 1438–9. [3] 1452–5.

O soul, be changed into little water-drops,
And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found.[1]

The fiends rush in upon their prey, and he passes from human view with a sharp convulsive wail hideous in its realism:

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!
Ugly hell, gape not! Come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books—ah Mephistophilis![2]

But the artist in Marlowe shrank from closing the tragedy on that wild shriek of pain. The Chorus enters and in soft tones speaks the dead scholar's epitaph:

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough.[3]

The last sound in our ears is the note of pure poetry.

The greatness of this closing scene may perhaps be recognized more clearly by briefly examining the attempts to amplify it in a later playhouse version. I have quoted throughout from the earliest extant text, the quarto of 1604. But a much fuller version was published in 1616. This is sometimes very helpful in supplying lines which have dropped out of the carelessly printed text of its predecessor. But it is heavily interpolated, and its alterations at the crisis of the play are very instructive. In the first place the censor was at work: he is an offensive creature at all times, but he is at his worst when he hunts a religious trail. He excised the great imaginative line,

See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament.

He disapproved of the poignant appeal,

O God,
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul.

The theology is quite harmless in his resetting of it,

Oh if my soul must suffer for my sin.

In Faustus' final appeal, 'Oh mercy, heaven!' is substituted for 'My God, my God' in the line

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!

[1] 1472–3. [2] 1474–7. [3] 1478–9.

In fact the good man was at pains to keep the deity out of this questionable business as far as possible.

Next he devoted himself to touching up Marlowe's defective metre.

One drop would save my soul—half a drop!—ah my Christ!

This kind of thing, he felt, must be made into blank verse: he made it, thus—

One drop of blood would save me, O my Christ!

In the line

O soul, be changed into little water-drops,

the slight hurry of the rhythm at the end of the line suggests the movement of the shower of falling drops. The 1616 quarto reads

O soul, be changed into small water-drops!

But the supreme effort of the interpolator was to add two scenes. In the original text the last persons to talk with Faustus were his friends, the three scholars; they retired into another room to pray for him.[1] One would have thought that, after the tremendous climax of his passing, no human being could have felt the slightest interest in following these minor characters any further. Faustus' dismissal of them had dramatic point: it was, for him, the snapping of all human ties. But the reviser brought them in at the death, with the fatuous remark that they had had the worst night

Since first the world's creation did begin.[2]

Thereupon one of their number discovers Faustus' limbs scattered in fragments about the floor.

The treatment of Mephistophilis is even worse. In the original his last and crowning temptation, which proves completely successful, is to master Faustus with the lure of

[1] In Mr. William Poel's original revival of *Faustus* in 1896 the centre of the platform was a curtained erection like the pageant stage of the miracle plays. The scholars stepped outside this on to the platform and knelt there for the final scene, giving the effect of kneeling figures in the lower lights of a stained-glass window.

[2] Appendix, 1480.

Helen's beauty. Mephistophilis, now secure of his prey, vanishes; his work is done. The 'adders and serpents', who fetch Faustus' soul, are underlings. But the more potent spirit is not forgotten: the last cry of his victim as he is driven to hell is to shriek out the words 'Ah Mephistophilis!' Nothing more: but it sums up the series of temptations from the moment, twenty-four years earlier, when Faustus first conjured up this embodiment of evil and prided himself on securing so meek a vassal:

> How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
> Full of obedience and humility!
> Such is the force of magic, and my spells.[1]

Marlowe, when he wrote *Doctor Faustus*, was beginning to study the subtle links of plot.

But the adapter intervened. He inserted between the prose prelude on which I have commented and the tremendous final speech an interlude in which Mephistophilis reappears to mock his victim, seconded in this moral effort by the Good and Bad Angels, who torture Faustus with peep-shows of Heaven and Hell. The problem of the rival quartos involves some serious difficulties which are not likely to be solved unless we recover the lost quarto of 1601. Meanwhile we must study the play in the earliest and least contaminated text, the quarto of 1604, supplementing it with some genuine fragments which are preserved in the text of 1616.

But even this earliest quarto is clogged with rewritten scenes which read like a coarse burlesque of Marlowe's main motive. They are not comic episodes worked artistically into the scheme of the play in order to provide an element of contrast or relief. They contain nothing that suggests, even remotely, any approach to the Shakespearian method by which, with incomparable art, a comic scene or character not only diversifies but deepens the tragic setting. Comedy in any form, and I am afraid particularly in the form of horse-play, appealed to an audience on the Bankside; and sometimes, if their craving for it was not satisfied, there was trouble at the theatre. Edmund Gayton, in his *Pleasant*

[1] 264–6.

Notes upon Don Quixote, published in 1651, describes the humours of the seventeenth-century playgoer on a holiday afternoon when, as he puts it, 'sailors, watermen, shoemakers, butchers, and apprentices are at leisure'. It is interesting to learn that Marlowe took with such an audience. 'I have known upon one of these festivals, but especially at Shrovetide, where the players have been appointed, notwithstanding their bills to the contrary, to act what the major part of the company had a mind to—sometimes *Tamerlane*, sometimes *Jugurth*, sometimes *The Jew of Malta*, and sometimes parts of all these; none of the three taking, they were forced to undress and put off their tragic habits, and conclude the day with *The Merry Milkmaids*. And unless this were done—as sometimes it so fortuned that the players were refractory—the benches, the tiles, the laths, the stones, oranges, apples, nuts flew about most liberally!'[1] I quote one more tribute which, I am sure, was taken from the life; it is interesting to find that, so late as 1625, the devils of the old miracle plays were retained in affectionate remembrance. In Jonson's *Staple of News*[2] Gossip Tattle, airing her theories of drama, says: 'My husband, Timothy Tattle—God rest his poor soul!—was wont to say there was no play without a Fool or a Devil in't; he was for the Devil still, God bless him! The Devil for his money, would he say; "I would fain see the Devil"'.[2] If Master Timothy Tattle ever saw *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, he must have felt for once that he had got his money's worth: the play—at least in the form in which we have it—abounds in fools and devils. And stage-directions such as the following—'Beat the Friars, and fling fireworks among them',[3] or 'Enter Mephistophilis; sets squibs at their backs; they run about'[4] —show very decisively the quality of the fun.

It would be ludicrous to credit Marlowe with the authorship of this farcical element. Of course, the mere assertion that the genius of Marlowe did not run in the direction of

[1] *Pleasant Notes*, p. 271.

[2] *Staple of News*, the first intermean.

[3] After 903.

[4] After 984

comedy and that his worst extravagances, such as the scene of the 'pampered jades' in *Tamburlaine*, betray a hopeless lack of humour—though obviously suggestive as criticism—cannot be accepted off-hand as disproof of the attribution. But we can point to some definite evidence. The most important is the memorandum of the stage-manager Henslowe that on November 22, 1602, he paid four pounds to William Bird and Samuel Rowley 'for their adicyones in doctor fostes'. Occasionally at the revival of an old play which had had a successful run, and might therefore be stale to the playgoer, a manager had a few new scenes inserted in this way as an advertisement. Interpolation can actually be traced in the 1604 text. In the eleventh scene is a reference to Dr. Lopez, Queen Elizabeth's physician, who was hanged on the charge of attempting to poison her a year after Marlowe's death. There is at least one startling contradiction in the text: in the opening scene Philip is on the throne of Spain; in the tenth scene the Emperor Charles V appears. There are also artistic considerations which point to the divided authorship. In one part of the play five scenes in succession—scenes vii to xi—are wholly or mainly comic. No author gifted with any true creative faculty could thus have thrown the serious side of his subject so completely out of focus. The ninth scene can be proved not to be the work of Marlowe. Robin, the ostler at an inn where presumably Faustus is staying,—perhaps somewhere in Germany, but the scene-locations are of the haziest—has stolen one of Faustus' conjuring books, and with it he raises Mephistophilis. Now it happens that in the third scene we have already had Faustus conjuring. In the darkness of night he makes a solemn invocation, using a Latin formula, and a devil at once deludes him by appearing. This spirit is dismissed to return in the shape of a Franciscan friar, and proves to be Mephistophilis. He explains that he came to Faustus, not in obedience to the incantation, but of his own accord:

> For when we hear one rack the name of God,
> Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,

We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damned.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.[1]

That is to say, Faustus' spells, which are just those of the commonplace practitioner in magic, would of themselves have been wholly ineffective, but Mephistophilis gives a subtle and sinister reason for obeying them. When Robin the clown tries his hand at conjuring, he mouths some absolute gibberish which forces Mephistophilis to appear at once and makes him complain bitterly to Lucifer,

From Constantinople am I hither come
Only for pleasure of these damned slaves.[2]

'How', says Robin, quite unabashed, although a few minutes before he had been running about in terror with burning squibs tied to him, 'from Constantinople? You have had a great journey; will you take sixpence in your purse to pay for your supper, and be gone?' Marlowe's method of raising the devil involved repudiation of the Trinity and devout prayer to Lucifer: this vacuous buffoonery, whether it is the work of Bird and Rowley or of an earlier interpolator, has not even the merit of a parody.

Consider too Marlowe's conception of hell. In spite of his employing medieval machinery and crudely personifying Conscience and Temptation in the archaic figures of the Good and Bad Angels, his hell is essentially spiritual. His contemporaries accepted the coarse material view of it as an underground torture-chamber for the sinner in which his worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Marlowe put aside this convention: he depicts hell as a phase of mental suffering infinite in its scope and duration. Mephistophilis with mordant irony explains this conception to Faustus immediately after he has signed the bond to surrender his soul:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place, for where we are is hell,

[1] 282–9. [2] 995 ff.

> And where hell is must we ever be:
> And to conclude, when all the world dissolves, .
> And every creature shall be purified,
> All places shall be hell that is not heaven.[1]

A point like this shows us what Goethe meant when he said of Marlowe's play, 'How greatly it is all planned'. This strength of conception, this clear outlook on the spiritual heights, is not found again in English literature until Milton. There are passages in the first and fourth books of *Paradise Lost* which almost seem to echo *Faustus*. Satan's cry of anguish in his address to the Sun strikes this note:

> Me miserable! which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
> Which way I fly is Hell; myself an Hell.

It would be hazardous to speculate what Milton might, and might not, have read in his undergraduate days when he was a student of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. It is possible that he read this play, alien though much of it would be to his Puritan temper. But of course a coincidence such as this need not mean more than that two poets of genius, treating in a very different medium the record of a lost soul, drew independently on their shaping spirit of imagination and emancipated themselves from the meanness of popular theology. For his loftiness of conception no less than for the deathless music of his verse we can think of Marlowe as standing for one moment by the side of Milton. He could earn no higher tribute.

PERCY SIMPSON.

[1] 553–8.

JOHNSON'S *IRENE*

The Story

IRENE is based on a story in *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*, by Richard Knolles, a book which Johnson always held in the highest regard, and praised in *The Rambler* as displaying 'all the excellencies that narration can admit'. But nowhere was he content to versify Knolles's prose, and from first to last his play is singularly deficient in allusions to be illustrated, or difficulties to be explained, by consulting the material on which he worked. It is the divergencies, not the similarities, that are of interest, and they are characteristic. In general we may say that Johnson was indebted to Knolles for little more than the suggestion of his *Irene*. He did not write with a book lying open before him, but once having found his subject let it take shape in his own mind.

The story which is told by Knolles in over three closely packed folio pages may thus be given here in brief; but there is one paragraph which must be quoted in full, not so much because it wins the attention of every reader and explains Johnson's praise of the narrative style, as because it shows why Johnson could not follow the story as he found it. He gave it a less violent climax, more in harmony with his idea of the moral purpose of the drama.

According to the story, Irene, a Greek of incomparable beauty and rare perfection, was made captive at the sack of Constantinople in 1453, and handed over to the Sultan Mahomet II, who took such delight in her that in a short time she became the mistress and commander of the great conqueror. 'Mars slept in Venus' lap, and now the soldiers might go play.' He neglected the government of his empire till the discontent of his subjects threatened the security of his throne. Mustapha Bassa, his companion from childhood and now his favoured counsellor, thereupon undertook to warn him of his danger, and performed the difficult duty

without incurring the effects of his anger. Torn awhile by contrary passions, the Sultan came to a sudden decision, and summoned a meeting of all the Bassas for the next day.

So the Bassa being departed, he after his wonted manner went in vnto the Greeke, and solacing himselfe all that day and the night following with her, made more of her than euer before: and the more to please her, dined with her; commanding, that after dinner she should be attired with more sumptuous apparéll than euer she had before worne: and for the further gracing of her, to be deckt with many most precious jewels of inestimable valour. Whereunto the poore soule gladly obeyed, little thinking that it was her funerall apparell. Now in the meane while, *Mustapha* (altogither ignorant of the Sultans mind) had as he was commanded, caused all the nobilitie, and commanders of the men of warre, to be assembled into the great hall: euerie man much marueiling, what should be the emperors meaning therein, who had not of long so publikely shewed himselfe. But being thus togither assembled, and euerie man according as their minds gaue them, talking diuersly of the matter: behold, the Sultan entred into the pallace leading the faire Greeke by the hand; who beside her incomparable beautie and other the greatest graces of nature, adorned also with all that curiositie could deuise, seemed not now to the beholders a mortal wight, but some of the stately goddesses, whom the Poets in their extacies describe. Thus comming togither into the midst of the hall, and due reuerence vnto them done by al them there present; he stood still with the faire lady in his left hand, and so furiously looking round about him, said vnto them: *I vnderstand of your great discontentment, and that you all murmur and grudge, for that I, ouercome with mine affection towards this so faire a paragon, cannot withdraw my selfe from her presence: But I would faine know which of you there is so temperat, that if he had in his possession a thing so rare and precious, so louely and so faire, would not be thrice aduised before he would forgo the same? Say what you thinke: in the word of a Prince I giue you free libertie so to doe.* But they all rapt with an incredible admiration to see so faire a thing, the like whereof they had neuer before beheld, said all with one consent, That he had with greater reason so passed the time with her, than any man had to find fault therewith. Whereunto the barbarous prince answered: *Well, but now I will make you to vnderstand how far you haue been deceiued*

in me, and that there is no earthly thing that can so much blind my sences, or bereaue me of reason as not to see and vnderstand what beseemeth my high place and calling: yea I would you should all know, that the honor and conquests of the Othoman *kings my noble progenitors, is so fixed in my brest, with such a desire in my selfe to exceed the same, as that nothing but death is able to put it out of my remembrance.* And hauing so said, presently with one of his hands catching the faire Greeke by the haire of the head, and drawing his falchion with the other, at one blow strucke off her head, to the great terror of them all. And hauing so done, said vnto them: *Now by this iudge whether your emperour is able to bridle his affections or not.* And within a while after, meaning to discharge the rest of his choller, caused great preparation to be made for the conquest of PELOPONESVS, and the besieging of BELGRADE.[1]

Such is the story which Johnson transformed in his *Irene*. This simple tale of lust and cruelty became in his hands a drama of the struggle between virtue and weakness. Irene is represented not as a helpless victim of the Sultan's passion, but as the mistress of her fate. Will she sacrifice her creed to attain security and power? She has freedom to decide.

> Wilt thou descend, fair Daughter of Perfection,
> To hear my Vows, and give Mankind a Queen?
> . . . . . .
> To State and Pow'r I court thee, not to Ruin:
> Smile on my Wishes, and command the Globe,

—so the Sultan woos her. In order that this freedom may be emphasized, she is placed in contrast to Aspasia, a new character for whom there is no warrant in the original story. Aspasia is the voice of clear and unflinching virtue; and she is rewarded with her escape from slavery in company with the lover of her choice. But Irene yields, and pays the penalty. She hesitates, complies, and half repents, then is betrayed and ordered to die. Her death is exhibited by Johnson as the punishment of her weakness, whereas in Knolles's story it is but the fortuitous conclusion of helpless misfortune. Even in his first serious work the great moralist,

[1] *Historie of the Turkes*, first edition, 1603, p. 353.

as he was soon to be called, converted a record of senseless cruelty into a study of temptation.

When some twenty to thirty years later Johnson came to edit *Twelfth-Night* he criticized the marriage of Olivia as wanting credibility and as failing 'to produce the proper instruction required in the drama, as it exhibits no just picture of life'. It was a juster picture of life that Irene should be strangled at the Sultan's orders for her supposed treachery than decapitated by him without warning and without reason in the presence of his admiring court; and he drew it so that there should be no mistake about 'the proper instruction required in the drama'. In his criticism of *As You Like It* he said that 'by hastening to the end of his work Shakespeare suppressed the dialogue between the usurper and the hermit, and lost an opportunity of exhibiting a moral lesson in which he might have found matter worthy of his highest powers'. Johnson never hastened in his *Irene*, and he never refused the chance of a moral lesson. Much of the interest of his early drama lies in the illustrations which it provides of his later critical precepts or observations, for he held the same opinions throughout all his fifty years as an author; they show change only in the confidence with which they are expressed. 'I do not see that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political'—so he said in his Life of Gray; and if we want to know what he meant we cannot do better than turn to his *Irene*.

Of the political truths it cannot be said—again to quote the Life of Gray—that we have never seen them in any other place; some of them were expressed elsewhere by Johnson himself, and better. The downfall of a nation is due not so much to the strength of the conqueror as to weakness and vice at home,

> A feeble Government, eluded Laws,
> A factious Populace, luxurious Nobles,
> And all the Maladies of sinking States.

Empires are weakened by the lust of conquest and possession:

> Extended Empire, like expanded Gold,
> Exchanges solid Strength for feeble Splendor.

In the perfect state all classes work together for the good of the whole:

> If there be any Land, as Fame reports,
> Where common Laws restrain the Prince and Subject,
> A happy Land, where circulating Pow'r
> Flows through each Member of th'embodied State,
> Sure, not unconscious of the mighty Blessing,
> Her grateful Sons shine bright with ev'ry Virtue;
> Untainted with the Lust of Innovation,
> Sure all unite to hold her League of Rule
> Unbroken as the sacred Chain of Nature,
> That links the jarring Elements in Peace.

This is a good statement of Johnson's Tory creed, and none the worse for the implied satire on the Whigs. It is the only passage in *Irene* in which the political allusion is specific; and it is introduced cautiously, with the responsibility for the anachronism thrown on the broad shoulders of Fame, for it was not the English constitution in the days of the Wars of the Roses that Johnson had in his mind to praise.

The moral truths abound. In *The Beauties of the English Drama*, a collection of 'the most celebrated Passages, Soliloques, Similies, Descriptions' which was published in 1777, no fewer than thirty-two passages are given from *Irene* amounting in all to close on three hundred lines. Even of the best we have to say that if they lend themselves to quotation, they do not dwell on the memory. Johnson moves more easily in the rhymed couplet than in blank verse, and is still more forcible in prose.

The characters are said to be Turks and Greeks, but if they were called by other names the play would lose nothing. They are members, or attendants, of the great family of tragic heroes of Drury Lane, and what they say has no local or racial limits in its application. But the play was suggested by a story that belongs to the year 1456,[1] and there is therefore one allusion to the Renaissance:

[1] According to Knolles's narrative, Irene was captured at the siege of Constantinople in 1453 and murdered just before the siege of Belgrade in 1456. 'This amorous passion indured the space of three continuall yeres' (Painter, *Palace of Pleasure*).

> The mighty *Tuscan* courts the banish'd Arts
> To kind *Italia*'s hospitable Shades ;
> There shall soft Pleasure wing th'excursive Soul,
> And Peace propitious smile on fond Desire ;
> There shall despotick Eloquence resume
> Her ancient Empire o'er the yielding Heart ;
> There Poetry shall tune her sacred Voice,
> And wake from Ignorance the Western World.

This is the one clear indication of the time of the play, and it may easily be missed. It was sufficient that *Irene* should conform to these great postulates of the regular drama—that human nature is everywhere much the same, and that what may happen at one time may well happen at another. A story laid in Constantinople in the middle of the fifteenth century could be made rich in moral lessons for a London audience of the eighteenth.

Johnson was not the first to make a drama out of Knolles's story. His is the fourth extant play on *Irene* in English. The other three have long been forgotten, and at least one of them is now not easily found. Here therefore are their titles in full:

I. The Tragedy of The unhappy Fair Irene. By Gilbert Swinhoe, Esq; London: Printed by J. Streater, for J. Place, at Furnifals Inn Gate, in Holborn, M.DC.LVIII.

II. Irena, A Tragedy. | Licensed, October 13. 1664. Roger L'Estrange. London, Printed by Robert White for Octavian Pulleyn junior, at the sign of the Bible in St Pauls Churchyard near the little North-door. 1664.

III. Irene ; Or, The Fair Greek, A Tragedy: As it is Acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, By Her Majesty's Sworn Servants. London: Printed for John Bayley at the Judge's Head in Chancery-Lane, near Fleetstreet. 1708.

The first of these is the crude work of a young Northumbrian, of whom little is now known beyond what may be

learned from the commendatory verses.[1] His Irene denies the Sultan. She asks

> but one Weeks respite,
> To beg from our great Deity concurrence to your Yoak;

and 'a pious Mufty' whom the Sultan had brought 'to joyn our hands as well as hearts' decides that

> This her Petition, in honour, cannot be deny'd.

The people rise to free the Sultan from her enchantments, and he yields to their wishes.

> The great content the Emperour took in her,
> Made him lay by the great Affairs of State to court her:
> At which the imperious Souldiers high incens't,
> Forc't his unwilling hand to part her head and body.

Yet on the morrow of her murder she was to have been his 'royal bride'. Irene had 'kept aloufe', and she died thinking of a former lover. This youthful exercise in dramatic composition was written at a time when there was little chance of its being acted, and—we might add—could never have been acted. Swinhoe was not well served by his printer; but no printer, and no prosodist, could have brought the semblance of regularity into the verse—if so it may be called—which is an odd jumble of groups of words divided as lines and ranging from four to twenty syllables.

The anonymous author of *Irena* found in Knolles's story the opportunity for nothing less than a genuine Heroic Play. The imperious Sultan becomes at his hands a love-sick swain, whose only thought is to be 'the more worthy to enjoy the title of fair Irena's servant'. Irena is all Virtue, and Mahomet is all Love and Honour. When his subjects rebel, his life is saved by Irena's chosen lover, to whom he resigns her in an ecstasy of gratitude and magnanimity. Whereupon he is rewarded with her commendation:

> You've obtained more glory by thus conquering
> Of your self, than 'ere you did by triumphing
> O're your enemies.

[1] Cf. *The History of North Durham*, by James Raine, 1852, p. 184, and *A History of Northumberland*, vol. i, by Edward Bateson, 1893, p. 212, and vol. v, by John Crawford Hodgson, 1899, p. 458 note.

To protect himself from his subjects he has to appear to kill Irena, but he kills a slave in her place. Another woman character is introduced with the purpose of adding splendour to Irena's virtue, and emphasizing her nice observance of 'a Punctilio of Love and Constancy'; and all ends happily with a double marriage. The play is mainly in prose printed as verse, but the monologues and the passages of argument and repartee are occasionally in the rhymed couplet which was then becoming the recognized metre of this form of drama. It appears not to have been acted.

Such violent liberties were not taken by Charles Goring in his *Irene, or the Fair Greek*. Here Irene laments her fate from first to last. She has not yielded in her heart to the Sultan, but her coldness and disdain keep alive his passion, and when he kills her to allay the dissatisfaction of his subjects, he tells her to consider her murder 'th' extremest Proof of wondrous Love'. The additional woman character is the Queen Mother, whose jealousy has stirred up the opposition that led to Irene's death. The play—in normal blank verse with occasional passages in rhyme—was produced at Drury Lane on 9 February 1708, and ran for three nights. It was successful enough to be twice quoted in *Thesaurus Dramaticus*[1] (1724), the first English anthology 'confined to the tragic muse'.

The interest of these plays lies mainly, and to the reader of Johnson perhaps wholly, in the treatment of the central figure. There is no question of borrowing. None of them owes anything to another, nor did they provide anything to their greater successor. The two earlier plays Johnson may be assumed not to have known; if he happened to know Goring's, he certainly took nothing from it. Here are four independent renderings of Knolles's story, and four distinct presentations of the character of Irene. A comparison serves to bring out in strong relief the characteristic moral quality of Johnson's work.

But the story of Irene was well known before Knolles

[1] Expanded into *The Beauties of the English Stage* (1737), and *The Beauties of the English Drama* (1777).

wrote his history. There was a fifth play, the lost Elizabethan play by George Peele, described in the *Merrie conceited Jests* as 'the famous play of the Turkish Mahamet and Hyrin the fair Greek'. Hyrin, or Hiren—a familiar term to the Elizabethans, and long a puzzle to the annotators of Shakespeare—is none other than Irene.

It was Bandello who first told the story in print. He says he heard it from Francesco Appiano, a doctor and learned philosopher, the great-grandson of Francesco Appiano who was doctor to Francesco Sforza II, Duke of Milan, and a contemporary of Mahomet II. It may have little or no foundation in fact; it may well be only a revival of the old story of Alexander, adapted to a century that was much occupied with the amorousness and the cruelty of the Turk. What alone concerns us here is that Bandello made it the subject of his tenth novella, entitled 'Maometto imperador de' turchi crudelmente ammazza una sua donna', and first published in 1554. The story soon spread throughout Europe. A French version was given in 1559 in *Histoires Tragiques Extraictes des Œuvres Italiennes de Bandel, & mises en nostre langue Françoise, par Pierre Boaistuau surnommé Launay, natif de Bretaigne*, and was reprinted in 1564 in Belleforest's continuation and enlargement of Boaistuau's collection. It appeared in English in 1566 as the fortieth novel in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. Then it was swept up in the widespread net of the Latin historians of Turkey. Martinus Crusius gave it in his *Turcogræciæ Libri Octo* (Basle, 1584, pp. 101–2), translating it from the French.[1] Joachimus Camerarius, in his *De Rebus Turcicis* (Frankfurt, 1598, p. 60), took it directly from the Italian.[2] In the Latin writers Knolles had authority to include it in his majestic history. But he was not content to work on the somewhat condensed versions which they provided. He had recourse to Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*,

[1] 'Excerpsi ex Gallica conuersione partis operum Italicorum Bandeli' (Crusius, 1584, p. 101).

[2] 'Non potui facere quin adiicerem id quod in Italicis narrationibus & de hoc Mahometha traditum reperissem' (Camerarius, 1598, p. 60).

and produced a skilful and even masterly rehandling of what he read in that collection of stories.

That the lost Elizabethan play was founded on the novel in *The Palace of Pleasure* is not a rash assumption. Bandello's 'Irenea' had become 'Hyrenée' in the French of Boaistuau, and 'Hyrenee' or 'Hirenee' in the English of Painter; and when Peele brought her on the English stage she was 'Hyrin' or 'Hiren'. From the reference to the play in the *Merrie Jests*, and from the vogue which the word suddenly acquired, we can deduce something of the character of her part. She must have differed widely from Johnson's Irene, else her name would not have supplied an already ample vocabulary with a new term conveniently like 'syren'.

Johnson missed an opportunity when he edited Shakespeare. He did not suspect the relationship of Pistol's Hiren to the heroine of his own tragedy.

Composition and Performance

Irene was produced under the name *Mahomet and Irene* at Drury Lane Theatre on Monday, 6 February 1749, and had a run of nine nights, the last performance taking place on Monday, 20 February. It was acted on the intervening Tuesdays (7, 14), Thursdays (9, 16), Saturdays (11, 18), and Monday (13), the theatre being closed on the Wednesdays and Fridays. Johnson's three benefit nights were the 9th, 14th, and 20th. None of the theatre bills is known to have been preserved, but in their place we have full announcements in *The General Advertiser*. From it we also learn that *Irene* was published on Thursday, 16 February.

When Arthur Murphy wrote his four articles on Hawkins's edition of Johnson's Works in *The Monthly Review* in 1787, he stated in one of them that *Irene* was acted 'in all thirteen nights', as its run was uninterrupted from Monday the 6th to Monday the 20th. This statement—and much more in these articles—he repeated in his *Essay on the Life and Genius of Johnson* in 1792.[1] He forgot about Lent. In the eighteenth

[1] Alexander Chalmers accuses Murphy of taking the greater part of his *Essay* from the Monthly Reviewer without acknowledgement. But

century the London theatres were closed in Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays, and in 1749 Ash Wednesday fell on 8 February.

Though not given to the public till 1749, *Irene* was the earliest of Johnson's more important works. He was engaged on it while running his school at Edial, near Lichfield, and had written 'a great part' before he set out in March 1737 to seek his fortune in London. According to Boswell he had written only three acts before his short stay at Greenwich, and while there 'used to compose, walking in the Park', but he did not finish it till his return to Lichfield in the course of the summer to settle his affairs. There is proof, however, that the conclusion had been planned and partly written while he was still at Edial. The manuscript of his first draft—now in the British Museum—contains in somewhat haphazard order matter that was ultimately worked up into each of the five acts, or incorporated in them without change. All that can be assigned to the spring and summer of 1737 is the completion and revision of the play.

This manuscript is of particular interest as it is the only first draft of any of Johnson's major works[1]; and it shows the effort that *Irene* had cost him. As far as we know he never took such pains again. The subject-matter of each scene is written out in detail; the characters are described—some are named who were afterwards omitted; there are page references to authorities. Johnson had read

the Monthly Reviewer was Murphy himself. He returned to these articles after the appearance of Boswell's *Life*, to work them up into 'a short, yet full, a faithful, yet temperate, history of Dr. Johnson'.

It is only fair to Murphy to add that if he says 'thirteen nights' in *The Monthly Review* for August 1787, p. 135, he had said 'nine nights' in the April number, p. 290, and reverted to 'nine nights' in his *Life of Garrick*, 1801, i, p. 163. The error would be negligible were it not that it has recently cropped up again. In calculations of 'runs' in the eighteenth century the time of the year must be taken into consideration.

[1] The original draft and the second draft of *The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language*, 1747, are both in the possession of Mr. R. B. Adam, of Buffalo, N. Y. (see the *Catalogue of the Johnsonian Collection of R. B. Adam*, 1921); but the *Plan* is not a major work.

widely in Knolles's *Historie,* and had at least consulted George Sandys's *Relation of a Journey . . . Containing a description of the Turkish Empire,* 1615, and Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale,* 1697.

Then came the trouble of getting the play brought upon the stage. Peter Garrick, the actor's elder brother, told Boswell what he recollected in 1776, and Boswell jotted down this in his Note Book:

> Peter Garrick told me, that Mr Johnson went first to London to see what could be made of his Tragedy of Irene that he remembers his borrowing the Turkish history (I think Peter said of *him*) in order to take the story of his Play out of it. That he & Mr Johnson went to the Fountain tavern by themselves, & Mr Johnson read it to him—This Mr Peter Garrick told me at Lichfield Sunday 24 March 1776. . . . He said he spoke to Fleetwood the Manager at Goodman's Fields to receive Irene. But Fleetwood would not read it; probably as it was not recommended by some great Patron.[1]

Both the Garricks used what influence they had with Charles Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and for some time they seemed likely to be successful. In a letter to his wife on 31 January 1740, Johnson reported that

> David wrote to me this day on the affair of Irene, who is at last become a kind of Favourite among the Players. Mr. Fletewood promises to give a promise in writing that it shall be the first next season, if it cannot be introduced now, and Chetwood the Prompter is desirous of bargaining for the copy, and offers fifty Guineas for the right of printing after it shall be played. I hope it will at length reward me for my perplexities.[2]

It was only the promise of a promise, and Fleetwood was an adept in the art of evasion. Next year we find Johnson so far discouraged by the actors as to turn to the booksellers. Edward Cave, always ready to assist his mainstay on *The Gentleman's Magazine,* wrote thus to Thomas Birch on 9 September 1741:

[1] *Boswell's Note Book 1776–1777 . . . Now first published from the unique original in the collection of R. B. Adam* (ed. R. W. C.). The Oxford Miscellany, 1925, p. 11.

[2] *Letters,* ed. G. B. Hill, i, pp. 4, 5.

I have put Mr Johnson's Play into Mr Gray's Hands, in order to sell it to him, if he is inclined to buy it, but I doubt whether he will or not. He would dispose of Copy and whatever Advantage may be made by acting it. Would your Society, or any Gentleman or Body of men, that you know, take such a Bargain? Both he and I are very unfit to deal with the Theatrical Persons. Fletewood was to have acted it last Season, but Johnson's diffidence or [1] prevented it.

Johnson was evidently abandoning hope of ever seeing the play on the stage, and was resigned to get what money he could for it by publication. But John Gray, the bookseller who brought out Lillo's pieces, would not buy it. A further stage in despondency is reached when Johnson is content to lend the manuscript to his friends. 'Keep Irene close, you may send it back at your leisure' is what he wrote to John Taylor, rector of Market Bosworth, on 10 June 1742.[2]

The turn in the fortunes of the play came when David Garrick, his old pupil and friend, assumed the managership of Drury Lane. Garrick had always been anxious to see *Irene* given a chance, and now that he was under a special debt for the great Prologue with which his managership had been inaugurated, he decided to make it one of the features of the next season. He chose a very strong cast, including Barry, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, as well as himself; and he provided the further attraction of new dresses and stage-decorations. 'Never', says Hawkins, 'was there such a display of eastern magnificence as this spectacle exhibited.'[3] 'The dresses', says Davies, 'were rich and magnificent, and the scenes splendid and gay, such as were well adapted to the inside of a Turkish seraglio; the view of the gardens belonging to it was in the taste of eastern elegance.'[4] The main difficulty was to induce Johnson to consent to alterations which Garrick knew by experience to be necessary. He

[1] British Museum, Birch MSS. 4302, f. 109; quoted with slight inaccuracies, by Boswell, i, p. 153. There is a purposed blank in the manuscript after 'diffidence or'—not an illegible word, nor an obliteration, nor a dash, nor a tear.

[2] *Letters*, i, p. 11.

[3] *Life*, 1787, p. 199.

[4] *Memoirs of Garrick*, 1780, i, p. 120.

told Boswell long afterwards that Johnson not only had not the faculty of producing the impressions of tragedy, but that he had not the sensibility to perceive them.[1] 'When Johnson writes tragedy', he said to Murphy, '*declamation roars, and passion sleeps*; when Shakespeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his own heart.'[2] Garrick knew that *Irene* would succeed only by the efforts of the players; and Johnson on his part feared that their methods of enlivening the action would detract from the seriousness of his purpose, and obscure the worth of his studied lines. 'Sir,' he said indignantly, 'the fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels.'[3] We may believe that he was strengthened in his indignation by the recollection of what he had recently written about Savage's experience with Colley Cibber—'having little interest or reputation, he was obliged to submit himself wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the emendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always considered as the disgrace of his performance'.[4] But Garrick insisted, and Johnson had to yield. What these alterations were, there is nothing now to show. The manuscript affords no clue, as it is only a first draft; nor does the book. Most probably the play was printed exactly as it had been written. The one alteration by Garrick of which there is record affects only the action, and it had to be abandoned. This was the strangling of Irene by a bow-string on the stage. The author of a tragedy in which the scene does not change and all is supposed to happen within one day[5] could be trusted not to kill his heroine before the eyes of the audience, and must have consented with no goodwill to so gross a violation of the methods of the regular drama. As events proved, Garrick had gone too far in his desire for stirring action. The

[1] *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, i, p. 198. [2] *Essay*, 1792, p. 53.

[3] *Life*, i, p. 196.

[4] *Life of Mr. Richard Savage*, 1744, p. 23; *The Lives of the Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, ii. 339.

[5] According to the manuscript the Scene is 'a Garden near the Walls of Constantinople', and the Time is 'Ten days after the taking of it'

strangling of Irene was at once greeted with cries of 'Murder, Murder', though John Bull, as Charles Burney put it,[1] will allow a dramatic poet to stab or slay by hundreds, and her death had to take place as Johnson had designed. From the evidence of a Diary once in the possession of Mrs. Garrick, the change was made after the second night:

Feb. 6, 1749. Irene. Written by Mr. Johnson—went off very well for 4 Acts, the 5th Hiss'd generally.
Feb. 7. Ditto. 5th Act hiss'd again.[2]

Burney and Davies, however, both say that the offence was removed after the first night. Garrick must have been responsible also for the stage-name *Mahomet and Irene*.[3]

The play was received without enthusiasm. The most adverse account is given by Hawkins who, always lukewarm, says that it met with cold applause. Burney, a man of warmer temperament, who was present at the first performance and several of the others, remembered that it was much applauded the first night and that there was not the least opposition after the death-scene had been removed. But a letter from Aaron Hill to Mallet, written while the play was in the middle of its run, shows that the chief attraction to him—and we may presume to many others—lay in the dresses and the acting:

'I was in town', he wrote on 15 February, 'at the *Anamolous* ⟨sic⟩ Mr. *Johnson*'s benefit, and found the Play his proper representative, strong sense, ungrac'd by sweetness, or decorum: Mr. *Garrick* made the *most* of a detach'd, and almost independent character. He was elegantly dress'd, and charm'd me infinitely, by an unexampled silent force of painted action; and by a peculiar *touchingness*, in cadency of voice, from exclamation, sinking into pensive lownesses, that both surpriz'd, and inter-

[1] In a note printed in the third edition of Boswell's *Life*.

[2] Sold at Puttick and Simpson's on 11 July 1900, 'Catalogue of Autograph Letters and Documents', p. 16.

[3] Clearly in 1749 *Mahomet and Irene* was expected to draw larger audiences than plain *Irene* would. But was the theatre manager playing to the gulls, and thinking not merely of the Great Turk but also of his popular little brother of the same name who is mentioned in the Drury Lane Prologue?

ested! Mrs. *Cibber*, too, was beautifully dressed, and did the utmost justice to her part. But I was sorry to see *Mahomet* (in Mr. B–y) lose the influence of an attractive *figure* and degrade the awfulness of an imperious *Sultan*, the impressive menace of a martial *conqueror*, and the beseeching *tendernesses* of an amorous *sollicitor*, by an unpointed *restlessness* of leaping *levity*, that neither carried *weight* to suit his *dignity*, nor struck out *purpose*, to express his *passions*.[1]

Garrick had evidently no difficulty in carrying the performance to the sixth night. In order to carry it to the ninth, so that Johnson might have three third-night benefits, he had recourse to expedients which Johnson cannot have liked. On the seventh night this grave tragedy was supplemented with lighter entertainment. It was not uncommon at this time to add a farce to a serious play, and it is to the credit of *Irene* to have survived to the sixth night without such aid; it was not uncommon also to add dancing; but on the seventh night Garrick added both a farce and dancing—and Scotch dancing. According to the announcement in *The General Advertiser* the play was presented—

With Entertainments of Dancing, particularly
The Scotch Dance by Mr Cooke, Mad. Anne Auretti, &c.
To which (by Desire) will be added a Farce, call'd
The A N A T O M I S T;
Or, The Sham-Doctor.

On the eighth night the Scotch Dance[2] was repeated, with Garrick's farce *The Lying Valet*; on the ninth there were 'the Savoyard Dance by Mr. Matthews, Mr. Addison, &c.',

[1] *Works of Aaron Hill*, 1753, ii, pp. 355–6.

[2] Dances were a recognized means of swelling the audience on a benefit night, and before Garrick's time were added at the author's risk. According to *The Prompter*, no. cxv, 16 December 1735, the author sometimes lost heavily: 'Third Nights are so *high*, against an Author, that unless he can make very considerable Interest, he may be in Danger of *losing*, instead of *gaining*. The Expence of *Dancers extraordinary*, and *pantomimical Machinery*, swell the Account to such a Height, that an Author now, who *accepts the Conditions of his Benefit*, only GAMES. 'Tis a Theatrical *Pharoah*, he may gain *three times* as much as he *stakes*; or he may *lose* his *Stake*, as well as his *Time* and *Labour*.' We need not assume that Johnson ran any risk with the Scotch dancing.

and Fielding's farce *The Virgin Unmasked*. Short as this run of nine nights may now appear, it compares not unfavourably with other runs about the same time. The twenty nights of *Cato* in April and May 1713 still remained the record for a tragedy. Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda* (1745) had nine nights, and his *Coriolanus*, produced immediately before *Irene*, had ten, and Aaron Hill's *Merope*, produced immediately after it, had nine with two additional performances (one 'by particular desire', the other by royal command) at intervals of a week; Moore's *Gamester* (1753) had ten with an eleventh a week later, Young's *Brothers* (1753) had nine, and Glover's *Boadicea* (1753) had ten.[1] The mere number of performances is thus in itself no proof that *Irene* had not succeeded on the stage. A more important indication is that neither Garrick nor any other actor thought of reviving it during Johnson's lifetime. Nor, it would appear, has it ever been acted since, though when it was included in Bell's *British Theatre* it was adorned with a frontispiece representing Miss Wallis as Aspasia—a part which she is not known to have played.

Financially, Johnson had no reason to consider *Irene* a failure. The author of an original play produced at Drury Lane during Garrick's management was given the receipts of a benefit night with a nominal deduction of sixty guineas for the expenses of the house, though the expenses usually came to about ninety.[2] From a manuscript note by Isaac Reed printed by Malone[3] we learn that after the theatre had reserved its hundred and eighty guineas there remained for Johnson as his profit on the three nights £195 17*s*. In ad-

[1] Such numbers here as differ from those given in Genest's *English Stage* have been derived from the advertisements in *The General Advertiser* and *The Public Advertiser*.

[2] See Garrick's letter to Smollett of 26 November 1757, printed in Murphy's *Life of Garrick*, 1801, ii, pp. 299–300.

[3] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, 6th edition, 1811, i, p. 176. The note was supplied to Malone, the editor of this edition, by Alexander Chalmers. The receipts for the three benefit nights were £177 1*s*. 6*d*., £106 4*s*. 0*d*., and £101 11*s*. 6*d*., making £384 17*s*. 0*d*. in all, from which £189 0*s*. 0*d*. had to be deducted.

dition he received from Dodsley £100 for the copyright. After twelve years of disappointment *Irene* thus at last brought Johnson altogether about £300.

Criticisms of *Irene* immediately appeared in periodicals and pamphlets. A long and laudatory letter which occupies more than a column of *The General Advertiser* of 18 February 1749, speaks of it as 'the best Tragedy, which this Age has produced, for Sublimity of Thought, Harmony of Numbers, Strength of Expression, a scrupulous Observation of Dramatic Rules, the sudden Turn of Events, the tender and generous Distress, the unexpected Catastrophe, and the extensive and important Moral'. The tone of the whole letter and such a statement as 'all who admire *Irene* pay a Compliment to their own Judgment' suggest that it was written with more than a critical purpose. Garrick probably knew something about what was in effect a skilful advertisement, issued at a time when he was taking other means to ensure a third benefit night. A more impartial but equally friendly account is the 'Plan and Specimens of *Irene*' which was published in *The Gentlemen's Magazine* for February when the play had been withdrawn. It gives an elaborate analysis of the plot, and after saying that 'to instance every moral which is inculcated in this performance would be to transcribe the whole', cites about a hundred and fifty lines with high praise. The play is censured in respect of the design and the characters, but commended for the justice of the observations and the propriety of the sentiments, in *An Essay on Tragedy, with a Critical Examen of Mahomet and Irene*, an ineffective and now very rare pamphlet published without the author's name by Ralph Griffiths on 8 March. Unfortunately no copy appears to be now known of *A Criticism on Mahomet and Irene. In a Letter to the Author*, which, according to announcements in *The General Advertiser*, was 'printed and sold by W. Reeve, in Fleet-Street; and A. Dodd, opposite St. Clement's Church, in the Strand', and was published as early as 21 February.

The success of *Irene* fell far below Johnson's hopes, but he took his disappointment, in his well-known words, 'like the Monument'. He continued to think well of what cost him more

labour and anxiety than any other work of the same size, and at least five quotations in the *Dictionary* (s. v. from, important, imposture, intimidate, stagnant) testify to his parental fondness. Nor did he come to agree with the verdict of the public till late in life, when, on hearing part of it read out, he admitted that he 'thought it had been better'.[1] His final judgement is clearly indicated in *The Lives of the Poets*. When he said in the Life of Prior that 'tediousness is the most fatal of all faults' and 'that which an author is least able to discover', and when in his Life of Addison he drew a distinction between a poem in dialogue and a drama, and added that the success of *Cato* had 'introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philosophy', we cannot but think that he remembered his own *Irene*.

While *Irene* was still unacted, Johnson appears to have thought of writing another tragedy. 'I propose', he said, in a letter of 10 June 1742, 'to get *Charles of Sweden* ready for this winter, and shall therefore, as I imagine, be much engaged for some months with the Dramatic Writers.'[2] Nothing more is heard of this proposal. Johnson's 'Charles XII' took nobler form in one of the great passages of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.

DAVID NICHOL SMITH.

[1] *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, iv, p. 5.

[2] *Letters*, i, p. 11.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

THE Brontës are not merely historical people who produced literature, they are themselves the heroines of a story written partly by Mrs. Gaskell and partly by Charlotte and enacted by the three sisters against a background of savage moorland country or narrow Belgian life and always, as it seems, beneath stormy or weeping skies. Their personalities have the completeness, the consistency, the perfect congruity alike with the background against which they stand, and with the lives they led, that we expect in great works of art. They have the immortality of the creations of the great masters who 'living not' 'can ne'er be dead'. Because of this one shrinks from disturbing that enchanted world in which, like the sleepers in Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*, they rest, 'age after age, mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying'. And indeed of the sisters as heroines I can say nothing that has not already been said far better.

I am going to attempt the perhaps less otiose but more ungracious task of analysing Charlotte Brontë's artistic processes and estimating in cold abstraction from her personality the value of her writing, her place in the history of the evolution of the novel.

To Emily and Anne I shall often refer in so far as they throw light on their elder sister's development, but one may suggest in passing that Emily was perhaps a greater literary genius. Her characters and story are not mere faintly disguised copies of the people she has met or of what has happened to herself, and this power of invention—as Charlotte recognized in criticizing the works of others—this power of making one's self the 'instrument' of life and telling a tale not verified in one's own person, is proof of that plurality of latent experience which is perhaps the best description of genius.

Now the foundation of most of Charlotte's work is simply her own life and character, modified in the case of *Jane Eyre*

by the influence of certain literary models. She learned her art in *Jane Eyre* and that book was used itself as a sort of standard and pattern in its two successors. It is with this process I propose to deal.

The use of the literary model is almost certainly due to M. Heger's method of teaching the two sisters. Mrs. Gaskell writes, 'He proposed to read to them some of the masterpieces of the most celebrated French authors . . . and after having thus impressed the complete effect of the whole, to analyse the parts with them, pointing out in what such and such author excelled, and where were the blemishes'. Then a similar theme was given out and an exercise written in imitation of the model. For example, one day he read to them Victor Hugo's Portrait of Mirabeau and then dismissed them to choose the subject of a similar kind of portrait. Charlotte Brontë's imitation of this was a portrait of Peter the Hermit. When M. Heger had explained his plan of instruction to the Brontës, he asked for their comments. 'Emily spoke first; and said, that she saw no good to be derived from it; and that by adopting it they should lose all originality of thought and expression.' Charlotte also doubted, but was willing to try, and it is clear that the plan was adhered to, in spite of Emily's objections. It seems probable that Charlotte was convinced of its value: she appears to have, as it were, got herself going in the composition of *Jane Eyre* in something this way. Remember Lucy Snowe's description of her method. 'When Paul dictated the trait on which the essay was to turn . . . I had no material for its treatment. But I got books, read of the facts, laboriously constructed a skeleton out of the dry bones of the real, and then clothed them and tried to breathe into them life.'

The earliest written of the novels we now possess was *The Professor* (this qualification is necessary, for Charlotte, like her sisters, appears to have written hundreds of stories, beginning in her extreme youth). It was not printed till two years after her death (1857), but it had gone the round of most of the publishing houses ten years before, while its

creator was engaged on *Jane Eyre*. No publisher would take it, but one criticized it with courtesy and insight, and expressed a wish to see a three-volume novel from the same hand. The publishers appear to have complained of 'want of varied interest'; and Charlotte Brontë writes that she has endeavoured to impart a 'more vivid interest' to *Jane Eyre*. This more vivid interest was given by crossing, as it were, her own experience with stories she had heard or read, the chief being Richardson's *Pamela*.

Jane is a nursery governess and her social position as such is nearly indistinguishable from that of Pamela as waiting-woman to Mr. B.'s mother. Both habitually talk of the hero as 'my Master' and are sent for to his presence. There is no doubt that part of the success of *Jane Eyre*, as of *Pamela*, was due to the romance of the rise of the heroine in social position. Mrs. Fairfax corresponds closely to Mrs. Jervis—the housekeeper who befriends Pamela. The house-party with the egregious Miss Ingram has a parallel in the party which comes to dine and inspect Pamela, and in Mr. B.'s sister who objects to the marriage. Rochester plans and nearly carries through a sham marriage with Jane, and Mr. B. plots a sham marriage. Many of the scenes correspond exactly, and it is amazing how many little points are reproduced. For example, in *Pamela* one of the servants who wishes Pamela well and cannot get access to her, disguises himself as a gipsy, and, pretending to tell fortunes, brings her a letter warning her about the mock-marriage. In *Jane Eyre* Rochester disguises himself as a gipsy and, pretending to tell Jane's fortune, hints at the truth of his position. One tiny point is significant of the method. In *Pamela* the gipsy wishes to draw Pamela's attention to the fact that she is going to hide the letter in the grass, since she dare not give it to her then. She does it thus: 'O! said she, I cannot tell your fortune: your hand is so white and fine, I cannot see the lines: but said she, and stooping, pulled up a little tuft of grass, I have a way for that: and so rubbed my hand with the mould part of the tuft: Now, said she, I can see the lines.'

In *Jane Eyre* Rochester disguised as a gipsy asks for Jane's hand, and then says, 'It is too fine . . . I can make nothing of such a hand as that; almost without lines; besides what is in a palm? Destiny is not written there.'

There are five important interviews between Jane and Rochester, after their relations have become intimate, in which the love-story finds expression. These are: Firstly, the walk in the garden at dawn after the night in which Mason was attacked by his mad sister. They sit in an arbour together and he tells her his story, but in obscure language, and tries to get her to approve the course he intends to take—that of ignoring his marriage and uniting himself with her. Then there is a scene in the orchard late at night, in which Rochester proposes. Thirdly, there is the long conversation the night after the interrupted marriage in which Rochester tries to get her to live with him as his mistress. Lastly, we have the two interviews at Ferndean. In the first, Jane, after her long journey, is introduced by the housekeeper and finds her master blind and ill. The final proposal is made when they are out walking.

Now each of these is developed out of similar incidents in *Pamela*. Pamela has interviews with Mr. B. in the garden and in an arbour. He consults her as to the desirability of his marrying, and on one of these occasions she believes him to be aiming at a sham marriage, as Rochester really is in the orchard scene. The scene at midnight after the interrupted marriage corresponds to the elaborate proposals sent by Mr. B. to Pamela, if she will live with him as his mistress. Again, Jane's meeting with Rochester at Ferndean is paralleled by Pamela's return when she hears that Mr. B. is ill, and by her interview with him, introduced by Mrs. Jewkes. Lastly, Pamela's marriage is decided on during a long drive she takes with her master, just as Rochester's successful proposal is made during a walk.

It is true that the mad wife was unknown to Richardson. His obtuse moral sense saw no difficulty in rewarding Pamela with the hand of the man who had tried every possible way of ruining her, and whose own selfishness was the only barrier

to marriage with her. Charlotte Brontë had to find a fairly adequate excuse for Rochester. Mrs. Gaskell thinks that a local story was the source for this part of the plot. But the whole incident is coloured by the practice of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school. In *The Sicilian Romance* the heroine's wicked Father, in order to marry a lady with whom he has fallen in love, keeps his wife shut up for years in an underground apartment. It is this episode which is the mainspring of the satire in *Northanger Abbey* (one remembers that Charlotte Brontë did not care for Jane Austen's novels). Catherine Morland being excluded, as she thinks, with guilty care from the rooms of her host's late wife, makes up her mind that the lady still lives a prisoner in the Abbey. The general sends his daughter and guest to bed, but announces that he must sit up to read pamphlets. 'To be kept up for hours by stupid pamphlets was not very likely. There must be some deeper cause: something was to be done which could be done only while the household slept; and the probability that Mrs. Tilney yet lived shut up for causes unknown, and receiving from the pitiless hands of her husband a nightly supply of coarse food, was the conclusion which necessarily followed.'

We come upon other traces of Mrs. Radcliffe's methods in *Villette*. The ghostly nun, who turns out to be Genevra, Fanshawe's lover, masquerading, is in Mrs. Radcliffe's worst manner. Charlotte Brontë uses the nun to give a romantic eeriness at various points, of which the most impressive is in the explanation between Lucy and Mr. Paul in the Allée défendue. The chapter ends: 'with a sort of angry rush—close, close past our faces—swept swiftly the very nun herself. Never had I seen her so clearly. She looked tall of stature, and fierce of gesture. As she went the wind rose sobbing; the rain poured wild and cold; the whole night seemed to feel her.' When we find that this apparition is a particularly silly man whose masquerading effects nothing, we are outraged.

Scott in the *Lives of the Novelists* criticizes severely this weakness of the School of Terror, but he himself offended in the same way, and, as Charlotte Brontë admired him above all

other novelists he may have been her model here. There seem always to have been, in her at least, and probably in Emily also, two divergent tendencies—the one towards minute and very accurate realism, and the other to what Mrs. Gaskell characterizes as 'wild, weird writing' 'to the very borders of delirium'. She gives an example of this and, apparently a little shocked, suggests that it may have some allegorical or political reference:

> It is well known that the Genii have declared that unless they perform certain arduous duties every year, of a mysterious nature, all the worlds in the firmament will be burned up, and gathered together in one mighty globe, which will roll in solitary grandeur through the vast wilderness of space, inhabited only by the high princes of the Genii, till time shall be succeeded by Eternity . . . that by their magic might they can reduce the world to a desert, the purest waters to streams of livid poison, and the clearest lakes to stagnant waters, the pestilential vapours of which shall slay all living creatures, except the blood-thirsty beast of the forest, and the ravenous bird of the rock.

This way of writing is the source of the romantic glamour which runs through all Charlotte's works, and leads her, for example, in *Shirley*, to amazing bombastic passages; but, as I hope to show later, it was a necessary part of the full expression of her genius. This sort of thing is not traceable to Scott, but owes no doubt much to Southey's epics and also something to Beckford's *Vathek*. One cannot help feeling that a better image of the fiery hunger of the Brontës' natures, of which they were themselves so acutely conscious, could not be found than Beckford's picture of the condemned beings who wander for ever through nightmare halls with their hands pressed to their flaming hearts. That *Vathek* ran in Charlotte's mind is proved, I think, by her misleading appreciation of the character of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. 'Heathcliff', she says, 'betrays one solitary human feeling, and that is *not* his love for Catherine; which is a sentiment fierce and inhuman; a passion such as might boil and glow in the bad essence of some evil genius; a fire that might form the tormented centre—the ever-suffering soul of

a magnate of the infernal world: and by its quenchless and ceaseless ravage effect the execution of the decree which dooms him to carry Hell with him wherever he wanders . . . we should say he was child neither of Lascar nor gipsy, but a man's shape animated by demon life—a Ghoul—an Afreet.' Now this passage gives the impression of volcanic force in the passions of Emily's characters, but it is untrue and unfair to Emily's art. However true it may be that *Wuthering Heights* grew out of the early fantastic tales imagined by Emily, she has explained carefully how Heathcliff came to be what he was. It is the result of the strange vicissitudes of his childhood, fostered by the forbidding countryside in which he grew up. In one of her poems we see her turning from the fantastic—which always kept its hold on Charlotte—to the stronger source of inspiration in her own nature:

To-day I will seek not the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell:
The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

To return to *Jane Eyre*. Starting from the story of the first of the four volumes of Richardson's *Pamela*, Charlotte Brontë's task was to make a three-volume novel of this material and to create a sympathetic and really virtuous heroine, and a hero who shall attempt an illegal union—one becomes pedantic in Charlotte Brontë's company—and yet

seem not unworthy of the heroine's devotion. Pamela, whose one real gift is beauty, and who is attracted to Mr. B. solely by his wealth and position, is a designing minx. As Birrell puts it, she 'was always ready to marry anybody's son, only she must have the marriage lines to keep in her desk to show to her dear parents'. Charlotte Brontë had to make us respect a girl who allowed herself to fall in love with a man who had no intention of marrying her, and ultimately gave herself to him.

Now this was attained largely by making the heroine's attraction for the hero to be character and intellect—not beauty. She had told her sisters that they 'were wrong—even morally wrong—to make their heroines beautiful as a matter of course'. In a story like *Jane Eyre* it might have been so, because it would have involved weakness—sensuality—in the hero. The task therefore which she set herself was to give, by dialogue chiefly, the impression of charm. Jane wins Rochester by her courage, truthfulness, resource, trustworthiness, but she keeps him by her wit. On the other hand, when the book was first published, Jane's passionate desire to be loved was thought to be 'indelicate', even 'coarse'. It seems probable that the author—whose advice on love and marriage in her letters is extremely early Victorian—must have perceived the danger of this beforehand.

She met it by the account of the unhappy childhood. The passionate misery of the orphan not only explains the love-hunger but raises in the reader a strong desire to see her come into her kingdom—it gets in fact the effect of a peripety. But the space devoted to the childhood enabled her to give a full-length portrait of the heroine, and since for that there was no material in *Pamela*, she was thrown back on her second source, her own experience. It is an admitted fact that all the scenes at the school are bitter but accurate pictures of the institution where four of the Brontë children spent some time and which two of them left only to die. Aunt Reed and her unpleasant offspring, one judges by the close correspondence to pictures in Anne's books, are portraits of households in which one or other of the Brontë sisters suffered as governesses.

It has not, I think, been pointed out so often that the third part of the book—that is to say, from the flight from Thornfield to the return to the blind Rochester—the relations in fact with the Rivers family—appears to be taken from Charlotte's relations with the Nussey family. Henry Nussey, a clergyman, proposed to Charlotte. Charlotte's answer, as well as what she says on the subject to her dear friend—her suitor's sister—show that his offer, like that of St. John Rivers, was scarcely that of a lover. 'He intimates', says Charlotte to his sister, 'that in due time he should want a wife to take care of his pupils, and frankly asks me to be that wife.' Compare with this Jane's account to Diana of her brother's views in seeking her in marriage. 'His sole idea in proposing to me is to procure a fitting fellow labourer. . . .' 'He has again and again explained that it is not himself, but his office he wishes to mate. He has told me I am formed for labour, not for love.' We see by the comparison the sort of modification made by art. Henry Nussey's need was for a good housekeeper, to his own economic advantage, it might be felt; there was no moral compulsion to assist him, though she speaks of gratitude to his family. St. John desired a helper for his cause, a sacrifice to be laid on the altar of his stern Deity.

On the whole Miss Brontë was equally successful in dealing with the difficulty of the hero's character. Rochester is a sort of Mr. B. crossed with M. Heger. His first marriage is represented as having ruined his chances of innocent happiness, the faithlessness of Adèle's mother completes his disillusionment. Further, the introduction of the egregious St. John Rivers acts as a foil: we are ready to pardon anything to an erring but passionate human being, after the presence of the harsh fanatic.

The structure of *Jane Eyre*, then, appears to be this. We start with the central episode of what may be termed Rochester's courtship at Thornfield framed on the model of Mr. B.'s courtship of Pamela. The intellect and character of Jane—her passionate love and yet power of restraint—is what raises this part above Richardson's novel. Then we find

that the hungry, unhappy childhood is needed to explain this character, and further makes us feel the intensity of her rest in love. But both our sense of proportion and the necessity of making us respect the dramatis personae require that this period of happiness should work up to a climax and peripety (reversal of fortune), and be followed by a new period of agony. *Pamela* falls to pieces because the marriage takes place too soon, and what follows afterwards is merely a series of episodes. *Jane Eyre* has the structure of a well-knit drama. The days and nights of physical as well as mental starvation, followed by the strange persecution of St. John, from whose grasp Jane escapes as by a miracle, forms exactly the preparation we need for the final happiness, intense and yet subdued, human and yet of the spirit. Jane's character which has held the book together finds its consummation: 'I hold myself supremely blest . . . because I am my husband's life, as fully as he is mine. . . . To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company. We talk, I believe, all day long: to talk to each other is only a more animated way of thinking.'

In *Shirley* Charlotte Brontë made an attempt to break away from her own inner life, but the extent to which she relied upon immediate and particular observation is nowhere more obvious. Shirley and Caroline are modelled on her sisters Emily and Anne. Her deep love and admiration for Emily—dead just about six months when the novel appeared—enabled her to portray a nature essentially unlike her own. That inspiration also enabled her to see her heroine in circumstances unlike those of the sad reality—wealthy and in a position of authority. When, however, it came to the love-making her instinct failed her completely. Charlotte Brontë apparently could not believe in any acceptable lover, who was not at least in nature a schoolmaster. Even Rochester has a touch of it. Shirley has been made so real to us that her devotion to Louis—a stick at best—is merely ludicrous.

It seems to me just possible that Louis was an afterthought; that her first intention was to give Shirley to Robert Moore and to let Caroline die of a broken heart. But the shadow

of the death of Anne which took place in May might well alter her purpose. Mrs. Gaskell tells us that the first chapter written after Anne's death was the 24th—that called The Valley of the Shadow—in which Caroline goes down to the gates of death, but returns. Now Louis makes his first appearance in the preceding chapter, and up to that point the way has been prepared for the gradual decline of Caroline. It would, I think, have been a greater book, if the author had hardened her heart and gone on. But to use in a work of art the clear impression imprinted by the agony of the death of the prototype would naturally repel the bereaved sister. Moreover, it might suggest to the world, should the identity of the Bells be discovered, that Anne had died of unrequited love. The idea would be intolerable. Nevertheless the book falls to pieces because of this. Miss Sinclair remarks on the difficulty of finding your way about in it—of remembering where a particular scene comes.

> You discern dimly an iron-grey Northern background drawn with strokes hard yet blurred. . . . There is an incessant coming and going of people who seem to have lost their way in the twilight too. . . . There is a good deal of confused frame-breaking, about which you do not care. . . . Presently Louis Moore appears and the drama miraculously simplified leaps forward and becomes alive, and moves forward under a strong but unsteady light. You can find your way now.

Now this does give the general impression of the book, and it is true that the course of the story becomes clear when Louis appears, but it also becomes feeble—*The Family Herald* inverted. Louis is a male Jane Eyre, or rather a male Pamela, he even has Pamela's passion for 'papers'. He has none of Jane's wit and charm. The book was intended to be on a wide canvas—to give the truth of the hard, wild, unlovely Yorkshire world with its splendidly dreary background of the moors. To depict Emily without that background was simply not to give her at all. Charlotte Brontë writes: 'My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her—out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side, her mind could make an

Eden.' Mrs. Gaskell notes that Emily's physical suffering when away from Haworth was such that her family at last acknowledged that whoever left home, *she* must stay there. It is significant, then, that Louis's courtship is conducted entirely in the house. The story ought to have worked up to a crisis in grand surroundings, and the end should have been mainly gloomy.

To her first three books Charlotte Brontë had, with perhaps a thought of sympathetic magic,—or a desire to comfort herself,—given a happy ending. In *Villette* she went back to herself as heroine, and was thus free to tell her tale without thinking what reflections it might cast on those dear to her; and *Villette* is her greatest book because in it the essence of her passionate, gloomy race finds expression. Lucy Snowe's temperament is her fate, and is linked with the stormy skies and seas which are the constant background of her story and at last the terrific agent of her doom. The author wrote to her publishers who had apparently pled for happiness for Lucy: 'Lucy must not marry Dr. John; he is far too youthful, handsome, bright-spirited, and sweet-tempered; he is a "curled darling" of Nature and of Fortune ... he must be made very happy indeed. If Lucy marries anybody, it must be the Professor—a man in whom there is much to forgive, much to "put up with". But I am not leniently disposed towards Miss Frost: from the beginning I never meant to appoint her lines in pleasant places'—a fact which ought to have been obvious to all. Mr. Brontë too pled for a happy ending. 'But the idea of M. Paul Emanuel's death at sea was stamped on her imagination until it assumed the distinct force of reality.'

The sound of wild winds and gloomy seas pervades the book, and metaphors of storms at sea are found everywhere, sometimes rather irrelevantly. The note is struck early on the night when Miss Marchmont dies.

> I had wanted to compromise with Fate: to escape occasional great agonies by submitting to a whole life of privation and small pains. Fate would not so be pacified: nor would Providence sanction this shrinking sloth and cowardly indolence.

> One February night—I remember it well—there came a voice near Miss Marchmont's house, heard by every inmate, but translated, perhaps, only by one. . . . The wind was wailing at the windows: it had wailed all day; but as night deepened, it took a new tone—an accent keen, piercing, almost articulate to the ear; a plaint, piteous and disconsolate to the nerves, trilled in every gust. 'Oh, hush! hush!' I said in my disturbed mind, dropping my work, and making a vain effort to stop my ears against that subtle, searching cry. I had heard that very voice ere this, and compulsory observation had forced on me a theory as to what it boded. Three times in the course of my life events had taught me that these strange accents in the storm—this ruthless, hopeless cry—denote a coming state of the atmosphere unpropitious to life.

The personality of the author is divided between Lucy Snowe and Paulina, which accounts for the introduction of the latter at the very beginning. Paulina's misery on parting from her father, and again at the indifference of Graham, gives out the theme of heart-sickness that is to be the subject of the book. Incidentally we notice that its effect, like the parallel arrangement in *Jane Eyre*, is to give us a satisfaction in Paulina's marriage to Dr. John which would otherwise be very feeble. But this is quite subordinate, the main intention of the book is tragic. Miss Sinclair thinks that 'the marvellous chapters which tell of Polly's childhood are manifestly the prologue to a tragedy of which she is the unique heroine', and that there had been a shifting of intention. A careful study of Charlotte Brontë's method leads me to disagree. The subject of the book is heart-hunger, the inevitable parting of all who love. Lucy Snowe is to be as it were the organ which will take up the theme, but it is first given out by the child Paulina, and by the story of Miss Marchmont. Lucy Snowe herself appears out of a storm of misfortune, an incarnation of affliction. 'I too well remember a time—a long time—of cold, of danger, of contention. To this hour when I have the nightmare, it repeats the rush and saltness of briny waves in my throat, and thin icy pressure on my lungs. . . . For many days and nights neither sun nor stars appeared; we cast with our hands the tackling out of the

ship; a heavy tempest lay on us; all hope that we should be saved was taken away.' That is our real introduction to her. We know nothing about her previous history. One notices that for the first time the hero or heroine does not give the name to the book. Grief is the hero. *The Professor* is the manifest germ of *Villette*, though the rather colourless hero has no link with Paul Emanuel. He is a male Lucy Snowe. But Madame Beck is foreshadowed in Mlle. Reuter. The appearance of the school itself: the Allée défendue with the Professor's window in the boys' school looking out on it; the intolerable minxes, who make the first lesson a terror to Lucy Snowe, recall the situation with which the male Professor has to deal, and Lucy deals with the situation in the same way, tearing up the minx's exercise before the class. But the dullness of which publishers had complained in *The Professor* is relieved partly by the sheer intensity of emotion, and partly by Charlotte Brontë's greatest creation, M. Paul. He lives—one would swear one had seen him. It was a stroke of genius to make him ludicrous. For the mate of a heroine she loved perhaps she would not have dared to do it: we owe M. Paul to the fact that Lucy Snowe is the embodiment of what was ominous in her own character, and she did not love her. Dr. John was admittedly drawn from the publisher Mr. Smith. One imagines that M. Paul may have taken some traits from his subordinate Mr. Taylor, who wished to marry Charlotte Brontë and whom she talks of with gratitude and kindliness, but also with a faint tone of amusement, and generally with the epithet 'little'. Great art is not so much 'emotion recollected' as *encased* 'in tranquillity'. Her detachment from the model gave the author the necessary calmness of perception: the element of laughter in which M. Paul is portrayed gives him his vitality. The scenes in which his generosity is dwelt on, might have been written by any one and almost of any character. M. Paul lives because of three scenes in which he is childishly vain, touchy, prying, ridiculous. There is the evening reading, when because Lucy moves a little away from him he clears the whole long table and sets her at one end and himself at

the other. Still better is the scene on the occasion of his fête. The little man hidden behind the pyramid of nosegays and awaiting in vain Lucy's addition to his triumph has an intense pathos and life, because we never identify ourselves with him. But perhaps best of all is the reconciliation. Lucy finds him prying in her desk, and he pleads with her that she might have spent a few centimes on a gift for him. She produces a little sweetmeat box and a watch-guard which she has made for him. 'He took out the chain—a trifle indeed as to value, but glossy with silk and sparkling with beads. He liked that too—admired it artlessly, like a child.' Then, having ascertained that it had always been intended for him, 'straightway Monsieur opened his paletot, arranged the guard splendidly across his chest, displaying as much and suppressing as little as he could, for he had no notion of concealing what he admired and thought decorative'.

But the true greatness of the book is that here Charlotte expresses fully the tormented agony of soul of the Brontë sisters—agony of living beings as it were imprisoned in vacuity. One remembers the description of Jane Eyre as she paces the gallery in Mr. Rochester's house before her love-story has begun.

> The restlessness was in my very nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third story, backwards and forwards . . . and allow my mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it . . . to let my heart be heaved by the exultant movement, which while it swelled it in trouble expanded it with life; and best of all to open my inward ear to a tale that was never ended—a tale my imagination created, and narrated continuously; *quickened* with all of incident, life, fire, feeling, that *I desired and had not in my actual existence.*

Accurate truth to life had always been Charlotte's artistic ideal. 'The Bells', she writes in 1848, 'are very sincere in their worship of Truth, and they hope to apply themselves to the consideration of Art, so as to attain one day the power of speaking the language of conviction in the accents of persuasion; though they rather apprehend that, whatever

pains they take to modify and soften, an abrupt word or vehement tone will now and then occur to startle ears polite.' The fact was that her emotions were so intense, in spite of the humdrum quality of the external incidents of her life, that this truth to life involved the inclusion of a poetic quality. She speaks almost with dislike of Jane Austen. 'What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study; but what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life and the sentient target of death—this Miss Austen ignores.' And again to Lewis, 'Miss Austen being as you say, without "sentiment", without poetry, maybe is sensible, real (more real than true), but she cannot be great'.

To express herself, then, it was necessary somehow to give utterance to the poetic quality in her. In the earlier books this was undoubtedly a source of weakness. It was apt to produce purple patches of the worst description. It found voice in those terrible 'devoirs' of Shirley and Mlle. Henri; in Jane Eyre's 'pictures'; in personifications; and is responsible probably for the scene with the nun to which I referred above. But for the most part *Villette* is free of this vice because in it the temperament of Lucy Snowe and her agonies of loneliness and melancholy become a perfect vehicle for this pressure of feeling. The subject of the agony of a soul yearning for an object, for a mate, and condemned to perpetual disappointment, to perpetual imprisonment in vacuity, not only welds all the incidents in the book together in the white heat of a passionate consciousness, but affords constant opportunities for that uprush of emotion which had done so much wrong to her art in earlier works. It is true that the greatest passages are spoilt by the irritating trick of verbal inversion—a trick learned perhaps from De Quincey, whose *Vision of Sudden Death* had appeared in 1849, when it was only too likely to come home to Charlotte Brontë. But apart from that, De Quincey's influence was probably for good—he taught Charlotte Brontë how to utter the vague and yet overwhelming sorrows of her heart. The following passage gives poignantly the sense of a gloom sublime in its intensity, and

rising out of the general atmosphere and theme of the tale, as a stormy wind grows gradually to a climax of frenzy:

> About this time the Indian summer closed and the equinoctial storms began; and for nine dark and wet days, of which the hours rushed on all turbulent, deaf, dishevelled—bewildered with sounding hurricane—I lay in a strange fever of the nerves and blood. Sleep went quite away. I used to rise in the night, look round for her, beseech her earnestly to return. A rattle of the window, a cry of the blast only replied. Sleep never came.
>
> I err. She came once, but in anger. . . . By the clock of St. Jean Baptiste, that dream remained scarce 15 minutes—a brief space, but sufficing to wring my whole frame with unknown anguish; to confer a nameless experience that had the hue, the mien, the terror, the very tone of a visitation from Eternity.

The external history of Lucy Snowe is neither the cause of her inner experience, nor its result, but merely a minor variation, as it were, on the same theme. This gives impersonality to her emotion. At last Charlotte Brontë has found means to transcend the bonds of the individual. This latest heroine, stripped of every adornment and attraction, destitute even of the possession of tragic affliction, the incarnation of frustrated desire, becomes the mouthpiece of a great abstract flood of emotion and gives utterance to the Infinity within her creator. The intensity of pain in *Villette* guarantees its author's immortality.

There is not room for death.

JANET SPENS.

TENNYSON AND WALES

1. *His Tours in Wales*

BOTH by his travels and his works Tennyson is associated with Wales. He appears to have made his first visit in 1839, at a time when he was still labouring under the burden of sorrow which the death of his friend Hallam had imposed upon him. At all times a lover of quiet and seclusion, Tennyson was then in greater need than ever of peaceful solitude.

On this tour he visited Aberystwyth, Barmouth, and Llanberis. His account of Aberystwyth is not enthusiastic, though he was interested to see the quaint costume of the women and to hear Welsh spoken about him. He had chanced upon a spell of serene blue skies, golden sunshine, and placid waters. This was not to his taste. He loved the 'much-sounding sea' and was disappointed that the bay of Aberystwyth did not show more of the tempestuous spirit for which it was renowned. Nor was he more fortunate with the literature which came into his hands during his stay. He appears to have stumbled upon T. J. L. Prichard's poem *The Land Beneath the Sea* and was moved to laughter by this uninspired version of the legend of Seithenyn. It is tempting to speculate what Tennyson might have made of the theme, if it had come to his notice in some more suggestive form. As it was, the inspiration which Welsh tradition was to give him sprang from a different source—the deeds of Arthur and his knights.

Weary of the unchanging, tranquil sea, Tennyson involuntarily turned his thoughts to Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire, where he had so often listened to the booming of the waves as they fell on the shore. What he had longed for and lacked at Aberystwyth he found at Barmouth, which rose correspondingly in his esteem. He describes it as 'a good deal prettier place than Aberystwyth, a flat sand shore, a sea

with breakers, looking Mablethorpe-like, and sand hills, and close behind them huge crags, and a long estuary with cloud-capt hills running up as far as Dolgelley, with Cader Idris on one side'. But more than anything else that Tennyson saw on this tour Llanberis appealed to him, and remembering the sombre and majestic setting of the mountain lake, as yet undefiled by unsightly heaps of refuse from the slate quarries, we cannot find this difficult to understand.

By the time that Tennyson made his second tour in Wales, in 1856, he had apparently acquired some familiarity with Welsh song. In June of that year, when confronted with ruin, owing to the probable failure of the bank in which his money was invested, he sought consolation in the stirring 'War-March of Captain Morgan'. That summer he returned to his old haunts, Barmouth and Dolgelley. The still pools of the stream in the Torrent Walk at Dolgelley, the mysterious giant steps of Cwm Bychan, and 'the high rejoicing lines of Cader Idris' were all a source of wonder and delight. His wife records in her diary how, when climbing Cader Idris, he was caught in a sudden rainstorm, which blotted out everything from the family anxiously waiting below. 'I heard the roar of waters, streams, and cataracts', she says, 'and I never saw anything more awful than that great veil of rain drawn straight over Cader Idris, pale light at the lower edge. It looked as if death were behind it, and made me shudder when I thought he was there.' However, Tennyson sent a reassuring message by his guide and ultimately joined his family in safety. Other places visited by the poet were Harlech, Festiniog, Llanidloes, Builth, and Caerleon. The last-named, with its Roman remains and memories of Arthur, made a deep impression on Tennyson. In a letter written amid the quiet of this ruined shrine of former greatness, he says, 'The Usk murmurs by my windows, and I sit like King Arthur in Caerleon'. From Caerleon excursions were made to Merthyr Tydvil, to Raglan, and to Caerphilly, and then the party returned home through Brecon, Gloucester, and Salisbury.

Twelve years later Tennyson again came to Caerphilly and

also visited Chepstow and Tintern. He beheld the ruins of the old abbey and the expanse of the surrounding country at much the same season as Wordsworth did seventy years before. Through the bare windows of the abbey he saw the golden cornfields, and, as he climbed an adjacent height, watched the Wye force its way past bluffs crowned with dark woods towards its junction with the Severn.

In 1871 Tennyson made yet another tour in Wales, this time in the north. Leaving home on 7 August, he broke his journey at Wrexham to stay with Mr. Archibald Peel, who had enjoyed his friendship for some twenty years. From here he went on to Llanberis. At the hotel where he put up, he was disturbed by the dancing of a jovial party in the room above his own, and in a letter humorously refers to the incident:

> Dancing above was heard, heavy feet to the sound of a light air,
> Light were the feet, no doubt, but floors were misrepresenting.

Early the following morning Tennyson set out from Llanberis and walked through Nant Gwynant to Beddgelert. He records his impressions thus:

> Walked to the Vale Gwynant, Llyn Gwynant shone very distant
> Touched by the morning sun, great mountains glorying o'er it,
> Moel Hebog loom'd out, and Siabod tower'd up in æther:
> Liked Beddgelert much, flat green with murmur of waters,
> Bathed in a deep still pool not far from Pont Aberglaslyn—
> (Ravens croak'd, and took white, human skin for a lambkin).
> Then we returned. — What a day! Many more if fate will allow it.

When Tennyson came to write his tales of Arthur and his knights, the landscapes that he had seen in Wales would naturally rise before his eyes and form the background of some of his *Idylls*. From Malory he had imbibed the idealized conception of a feudal ruler whose fame for bravery and courtesy had spread through many lands and whose knights were devoted to his service. Tennyson, gazing upon the ruins of castles raised by Norman kings and nobles, peopled them with visions of the figures that he had come to love in

medieval legend. It is conceivable that such a castle as is described in *The Marriage of Geraint* is a reminiscence of his Welsh tours:

> Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
> His charger trampling many a prickly star
> Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
> He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.
> Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;
> And here had fallen a great part of a tower,
> Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
> And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers;
> And high above a piece of turret stair,
> Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
> Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
> Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,
> And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd
> A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

Whatever scene may have prompted this description as a whole, we know that the concluding lines were suggested by the sight of the ivy-covered ruins of Tintern Abbey. In various ways this spot was of especial significance to Tennyson. In the first place it formed the background of one of Wordsworth's greatest poems, for which, in spite of the fault that he found with its over-lengthy opening, Tennyson had a profound admiration. Again, Tintern had a personal claim upon him. Not far away, on the opposite side of the Bristol Channel, was Clevedon, in whose lonely church on the hill overlooking the broad, flowing waters where the Severn joins the sea, lay the remains of Arthur Hallam. Inevitably, when the poet visited Tintern, his mind wandered to the friend whose body had been conveyed from Vienna to its final resting-place by this western shore, and he composed the beautiful lines which afterwards appeared in the nineteenth canto of *In Memoriam*:

> The Danube to the Severn gave
> The darken'd heart that beat no more;
> They laid him by the pleasant shore,
> And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

Another of Tennyson's poems inspired by Tintern Abbey was *Tears, idle tears*. At the sight of the magnificent ruins and of the golden cornfields stretching around him, he was seized with a feeling of regret for the passing of all that is fair to look upon. Possibly the memory of Hallam subconsciously lent an added poignancy to this mood of tender longing. However, Tennyson informed Locker-Lampson that what moved him to write the poem was not real woe, but rather the yearning that young people occasionally experience for that which seems to have departed for ever. This feeling, which was especially strong in Tennyson as a youth, finds expression in the lines :

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Tennyson's visit to the Welsh coast in 1839 gave rise to a beautiful simile in *The Princess*. It occurs in the second part, in the description of Lady Blanche's daughter, the lovely Melissa, who has come with a message from her mother. She stands hesitating upon the threshold :

with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

In reply to some wiseacres who would have it that the simile was taken partly from Beaumont and Fletcher, partly from Shakespeare, Tennyson stated that it was founded on his own observations while bathing in Wales.

The place which suggested this passage might have been either Barmouth or Aberystwyth. There can be no such doubt concerning the scene which inspired Canto 86 of *In Memoriam*. It was Barmouth, and presumably on the occasion of the poet's first tour in 1839. On a beautiful evening he stands and gazes out to sea. Between two promontories the tide flows calmly along, a west wind gently wafts the rich fragrance of summer flowers after rain, the solemn shades of evening descend, and far away, bathed in the mysterious light of the setting sun, gleams the rising star. To the heart of the poet, lacerated by memories of his lost friend, comes a feeling of harmony long unknown:

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace'.

This evening at Barmouth was evidently a supreme and unforgettable spiritual experience. At Llanberis Tennyson had no moments of such intense and sublime ecstasy, but in his poems there are several reminiscences of his stay there. *Edwin Morris* was written at Llanberis, which Tennyson has

taken as the setting of the poem. He speaks of the bracken rusted on the crags and of a ruined castle, presumably the old stronghold of Dolbadarn:

> built
> When men knew how to build, upon a rock
> With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock.

At the end of the poem the lover, fondly recalling his blissful rambles by the lake, says:

> In the dust and drouth of London life
> She moves among my visions of the lake,
> While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
> While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
> The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

It would, of course, be foolish to apply these lines literally to the poet himself, but it is perhaps permissible to read in them something of the delight which we know Tennyson to have felt in this mountain retreat. Though *Edwin Morris* is but one of Tennyson's minor poems, the last line is striking in its beauty and fitness.

Llanberis is also the scene of *The Golden Year*, another of the early poems. The poet tells how he and 'old James' had been up Snowdon and on their descent found Leonard at Llanberis. With him they crossed between Llyn Padarn and Llyn Peris and climbed the hill on the opposite side. The poem ends with a description of the blasting in the hills, whose mighty echoes come as an effective contrast to the heated arguments which these puny mortals have just been putting forth:

> He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
> The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
> And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

Yet another reminiscence of Llanberis appears in *The Sisters*. Tennyson revives the memory of the summer night when first he saw it by the gleam of lightning piercing the darkness, and draws from it support for the view that love at first sight for a face seen but a moment and then gone though strange, is possible. Once, he says:

when first
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
A moonless night with storm—one lightning-fork
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd there
The full day after, yet in retrospect
That less than momentary thunder-sketch
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The mention of Llanberis inevitably brings Snowdon to the mind, and Snowdon also figures in Tennyson's poetry. In the seventh part of *The Princess* the Lady Ida is shown mourning over the collapse of her ideals. She climbs to the roof and looking down sees her woman's sanctuary overrun by men. To emphasize her helplessness Tennyson introduces as a simile the sudden storm which he once witnessed from the top of Snowdon as he gazed over the neighbouring mountains to the coast and the sea beyond. Ida is

As one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world.

Though no locality is this time specified, the hills of Wales again rise before Tennyson's eye in *Sir John Oldcastle*. He pictures the zealous reformer, who at the beginning of the fifteenth century has fled from the Tower and sought a refuge among the Welsh mountains. Oldcastle wanders about, enduring great hardships patiently and cheerfully, uplifted by his faith in God and his hope in the future:

God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

Oldcastle wishes that he could speak the tongue of those among whom he now wanders in exile, not for the purpose of winning them to the true faith, though he contemplates doing so at some future season, but to satisfy his gnawing hunger. As it is, no sooner is his English accent heard than

memories of bloody feuds not yet appeased prompt a sullen refusal of his request for bread:

> I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,
> Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd ears,
> Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—
> But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd
> They said with such heretical arrogance
> Against the proud archbishop Arundel—
> So much God's cause was fluent in it—is here
> But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
> 'Bara!'[1]—what use? The shepherd, when I speak,
> Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard
> 'Dim Saesneg'[2] passes, wroth at things of old—
> No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh
> He might be kindlier; happily come the day!

As may be seen from this poem, Tennyson possessed some knowledge of the Welsh tongue and in *Geraint and Enid* his transformation of the brutal earl's name from its Welsh form to the English Doorm proves his familiarity with Welsh pronunciation. *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid*, originally published as one poem under the name of *Enid*, were practically completed during Tennyson's tour of 1856. It is but natural therefore that these poems should be unusually rich in allusions to Welsh scenes. In *The Marriage of Geraint* the hero is so inspired by his love for Enid that, when he challenges the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk, he feels as if he could move Cader Idris. And when he has won Enid he brings her to Arthur's capital where the Queen awaits them with impatience.

> Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd
> The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,
> Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
> And white sails flying on the yellow sea;
> But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
> Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,
> By the flat meadow, till she saw them come.

In *Geraint and Enid* the Usk is again mentioned, when Enid warns Geraint of three villains lying in ambush.

[1] Bread. [2] No English.

In scarce longer time
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
Before he turn to fall seaward again,
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold
. . . . . .
Three other horsemen.

Recollections of North Wales also emerge in *Geraint and Enid*. Once, as Tennyson stood near Festiniog listening to the brawling of a mountain-torrent, he heard the louder roar of a large waterfall and he uses this experience as a simile to convey the effect of Geraint's massive voice heard above the din of battle.

As one,
That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,
All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears
The drumming thunder of the huger fall
At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear
His voice in battle.

At the close of the poem occurs yet another simile, which embodies a personal observation of Tennyson. Geraint, now reconciled to Enid, lies recovering of his grievous wound, and her gentle presence

Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood
With deeper and with ever deeper love,
As the south-west that blowing Bala lake
Fills all the sacred Dee.

2. *His Knowledge of Welsh Literature and Tradition*

These reminiscences of Tennyson's Welsh tours are by no means the only link which connects him with Wales. He knew something of Welsh history, literature, and tradition. As his son records in the *Memoir*, before 1840 Tennyson could not decide whether to cast the Arthurian legends into the form of an epic or into that of a musical masque, but having settled on the epic form he abandoned himself to serious study of his theme. 'He thought, read, and talked about King Arthur.' Keeping his goal in view, Tennyson

set himself, during his stay in Wales in 1856, to acquire some knowledge of Welsh with the help of local schoolmasters, and he and his wife read together the *Hŭnes Cymru* of Thomas Price, the poems of Llywarch Hên, and the *Mabinogion*.

One of the best known tales in the *Mabinogion* is that of 'Math the Son of Mathonwy', in the course of which it is narrated how Math and Gwydion by magic wrought a maiden from the blossoms of the oak, the broom, and the meadow-sweet. She was the fairest and most graceful being that man ever saw and they named her Blodeuwedd. In *The Marriage of Geraint* the mother of Enid, arraying her in a rich silken robe, compares her to this maiden of wondrous beauty. However, the only tale in the *Mabinogion* which Tennyson treated fully was that of 'Geraint the Son of Erbin'.

A comparison of Tennyson's version with the original is illuminating in various ways. One notices immediately a number of changes in the narrative, the object of which was to secure greater unity. In the tale, Limours figures only in the second part, after the marriage of Geraint and Enid. Tennyson makes him a suitor, who had pestered Enid with his attentions long before she had met Geraint. Similarly, Edyrn, instead of vanishing early on, as in the tale, is reintroduced at the close. In order to weld together both parts of his story, Tennyson also makes the dress of Enid an important feature, so much so that at times, especially towards the end of *The Marriage of Geraint*, the space given to it seems disproportionate. The Queen is made to say that, even if Geraint's bride were a beggar, she would clothe her like the sun; hence Geraint brings Enid to court in her faded silk, and this it is which holds a higher place in her affection than the gorgeous robe that Doorm the tempter offers her. Tennyson is equally careful to relate his story to the central theme of the *Idylls of the King*, which gives it a purpose all its own. On the morning of the hunt Guinevere is pictured as lying in bed lost in sweet dreams of Lancelot, and it is the fear lest her example should taint Enid which makes Geraint withdraw his wife from the court. At the close Tennyson

brings before us the ideal king, and it is while fighting for Arthur that Geraint perishes.

The firm constructive hand of Tennyson is again seen in the omission of many details in the medieval tale which appeared to him discursive and irrelevant. He never forgot that he wished to concentrate on Geraint and Enid, and that everything else must be subordinated to the narrative of their relations. The tale opens by saying that Arthur had held court at Caerleon for seven Easters and five Christmases, but that on this occasion it was Whitsuntide. Then it explains that Caerleon was chosen because it was so easy of access by sea and land. Tennyson briefly mentions that Arthur held court at Caerleon at Whitsuntide. Next the tale speaks of the nine tributary kings, the earls and barons who were Arthur's guests, of the thirteen churches set apart for mass and of how they were allotted—one for Arthur and his guests, one for the Queen and her ladies, one for the Steward of the Household and the suitors, a fourth for the Franks and other officers, and the remaining nine for the Masters of the Household, of whom the most famous was Gwalchmai because of his noble birth and prowess in war. We then hear who was Arthur's chief porter, how he carried out his office and how he had seven men under him whose task it was, except at one of the high festivals, to guard Arthur. Thereupon follow their names, lineage, and personal peculiarities, while in the meantime the story is delayed. Tennyson expedites it by leaving out all these particulars.

Characteristic of the old Welsh narrator is not only his love of genealogy but also his passion for festivities, and so he proceeds to relate how Arthur and his court spent the night before the hunt in song and entertainments. He then tells how they went to bed, how Arthur on awaking called his four attendants, whose names and lineage are of course given, and how they arrayed Arthur. We learn further that the King noticed Guinevere so fast asleep that she did not move in her bed, and that he told the attendants not to awake her; then that he heard the horns sounding, one from near the lodging of the chief huntsman and the other from near

that of the chief page. All this Tennyson dismisses in two lines:

> So with the morning all the court were gone.
> But Guinevere lay late into the morn.

The contrast between the poem and the tale may again be illustrated from the scene where Geraint and Enid are entertained at court. The tale mentions the minstrelsy, the ample supply of liquor, the multitude of games, and the bountiful gifts bestowed upon Enid, including the stag's head which increased her fame and added to the number of her friends. To Tennyson all this was as nothing, and he merely says of Enid that the Queen

> clothed her for her bridals like the sun;
> And all that week was old Caerleon gay.

Another portion of the tale which Tennyson modified was that concerning the departure of Geraint and Enid from Arthur's court after their marriage. The tale describes how ambassadors came from Erbin of Cornwall, who asked that his son should be allowed to return, as he himself was growing old and his neighbours began to cast covetous eyes on his possessions, so that Geraint would be better occupied in defending these territories than in winning profitless tournaments. It proceeds to relate how the ambassadors refreshed themselves after their journey and how Arthur upon reflection found it but right that Geraint should go. We hear likewise of the conversation between Geraint and Arthur and the Queen; of those who accompanied Geraint; of the discussions about the desirability of Edyrn forming one of their number; of the company awaiting Geraint on the other side of the Severn; of the welcome given to him in his own land; of the rejoicing at Erbin's court, the minstrelsy, games, and feasting; of how Erbin handed over the power to Geraint in spite of his reluctance; of how the vassals pledged themselves to Geraint; of the gifts which were exchanged, and of Geraint's progress through Cornwall to receive homage; and finally of how he escorted the nobles, who had come with him from Arthur's court, on their homeward journey and after-

wards inspected even the uttermost parts of his dominions. In Tennyson, on the other hand, nothing is said of the aged Erbin's pathetic appeal; the reason for Geraint's departure is that he fears the effect upon Enid of the Queen's example and hence gives as a pretext to the King the fact that his princedom, bordering on lands infested with bandits, needs his protecting arm. All the other details are compressed into four lines:

> And the King
> Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
> Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,
> And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores
> Of Severn, and they past to their own land.

Previously there is in the tale an awkward passage which Tennyson was too much of an artist to leave unaltered. After the encounter with the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk the story of Geraint and Enid is dropped for some time, and the tale reverts to Arthur's hunting of the stag, and introduces an argument as to who shall be presented with its head. This being settled, it goes on to describe in detail the sorry appearance of Edyrn when he came to Arthur's court, the conversation with the King and Queen, the treatment accorded to Edyrn and his lady, and the healing of his wounds by Morgan Tud, the royal physician. Only after this lengthy digression is the story of Geraint and Enid resumed. Tennyson avoids this jerky conduct of the narrative. He ignores the hunt and dismisses Edyrn briefly, returning to him at the close of the poem, when the lovers' tale is ended.

Tennyson saw clearly that many points which a medieval writer would be disposed to comment on were not merely unessential to the main theme but even a hindrance to it. What more natural, when Geraint sets out with Enid, than that the tale should explain what steps were taken to carry on the administration in his absence? But Tennyson passes over it in silence. Again, the medieval reader would delight in the description of the horses of the dwarf, the knight and the lady, and of the armour or raiment they wore. Here

also Tennyson says nothing. Not less significant is his treatment of the combats in which the tale abounds. The old writer revelled in fighting, so much so that the frequent triumphs of the hero become extravagant, and we find ourselves no longer in the world of reality but in the realm of marvels. Tennyson begins the encounter of Geraint with the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk by shortening the account of the tournament; it is not allowed to obscure the central motive. In the description of Geraint's quest the tale makes him defeat three different bands of robbers. Their numbers, whether three, four, or five, are immaterial. Like so many puppets they come forward and are mechanically dispatched by Geraint. Tennyson omits one of these combats, reduces the number of assailants in the others, and by the manner of his description renders his story more convincing. In the first combat Geraint kills his first enemy with his lance, and then, darting out his sword to right and left, puts the others out of action; in the second the leader is pictured as one of enormous stature, and as soon as he is overthrown his companions flee in panic.[1] In the tale the combat which follows the flight of Geraint and Enid from the town is ludicrous. Eighty knights in succession attack Geraint and with mechanical precision each is overcome with one blow. The Earl comes next and holds out a little longer, but only to be defeated in his turn. Tennyson is infinitely more vivid, dramatic, and credible when he tells how

> Wild Limours,
> Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud
> Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,
> Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,
> And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
> Dash'd on Geraint.

Limours is overthrown, then the man behind him, whereupon the rest, seized with terror at the approach of Geraint, turn their horses in flight.

The poem omits altogether several encounters, such as that

[1] Variety is also obtained by the changing attitude of Enid who in the first combat looks on, but in the second anxiously stands aside with

with Gwiffert Petit, who will let no one pass his tower without a duel, those with Kai and Gwalchmai, when Geraint refuses to accompany them to Arthur, and that with the giants. Tennyson would have nothing to do with adventure for its own sake, and he felt that all these struggles by their very number became incredible and also impeded the march of the main story. Although his hero's qualities are heightened, Tennyson did not wish him to be a mere fairy-tale figure. For this reason, and also because the tale of the reconciliation of Geraint and Enid was complete, he omitted as superfluous the adventure of the magic mist.

In harmony with Tennyson's desire to avoid mere marvels is his treatment of character. With him characterization and the analysis of motive take a prominent place; in the tale they are fragmentary or non-existent. In no respect are the medieval tale and the nineteenth-century poem more unlike than in the love of incident on the one hand and the interest in psychology on the other. Characters such as the dwarf and Edyrn his master, Limours, Doorm, Enid's mother and Yniol assume much clearer shape under Tennyson's hand. In the tale no explanation is given of the dwarf's churlish conduct to the Queen's attendant. Tennyson pictures him as old, vicious, irritable, and proud like his haughty master, so that at once we understand his action. At a later stage, when Edyrn has 'weeded his heart' and is about to be admitted to the Round Table, he is made to recount to Enid the causes of his former arrogance.

To the character of Limours Tennyson devotes far more attention than the corresponding figure receives in the tale. In the latter he is shown in a more favourable light. Thus, when he is informed of the arrival of Geraint and Enid in his town, he gives instructions that they shall be honourably used, sends a youth to wait upon them, and himself pays a visit of courtesy. He has no evil intent, and it is only on seeing the beauty of Enid that he tries to induce her under threats of violence to abandon Geraint. Tennyson, who intro-

averted gaze, just as she warns Geraint sometimes by speech, sometimes by pointing silently to the dust raised by the hoofs of his foes.

duces Limours as a suitor for Enid in the earlier portion of the story, has already sketched the man:

> A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,
> Drunk even when he woo'd.

We are therefore prepared for Limours when he and his followers burst into the room of Geraint and Enid. Effeminate in appearance and pale from dissipation, he addresses Geraint face to face with a courtly air, but amidst this display of cordiality watches out of the corner of his eye the sad and lonely Enid. Geraint offers refreshment and Limours, flushed with wine, tells tales of double meaning and his wit having made Geraint merry, he asks leave to speak to her. He then declares his love in a sentimental vein. She is the pilot star of his solitary life, his early and his only love. It is the loss of her which has made him wild, and yet he is not wholly riotous. He insinuates that Geraint has wearied of her; she need but say the word and he shall be removed. If she will not, Limours threatens to take advantage of his superior power, but the next moment apologizes for his madness. Then

> Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume
> Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous earl.

Tennyson has no wish that our sympathy should be won by the maudlin self-pity of Limours. He shows him on his way home with 'wine-heated eyes', babbling to his followers of Enid's love for him.

Another full-length portrait is that of Earl Doorm. In the tale the Earl is courteous to Enid at first and only when his desires are thwarted does he use force. His arguments, when he seeks to induce her to forget Geraint, are almost kindly: 'I will act towards thee in such wise, that thou needest not be sorrowful, whether yonder knight live or die. Behold, a good Earldom, together with myself, will I bestow on thee; be therefore happy and joyful.' It is not until Enid has irritated him by her stubborn refusal that he loses his temper and boxes her ears. In Tennyson, on the other hand, the wild, licentious character of the Earl is suggested from the

beginning. As Enid sat by the wounded Geraint no one heeded her:

> A woman weeping for her murder'd mate
> Was cared as much for as a summer shower.

One took him for a victim of the Earl and found it too perilous to stop and pity him. Then came one of Doorm's men half-whistling, half-singing a coarse song and drove the dust in Enid's eyes. Another traveller, a fugitive

> flying from the wrath of Doorm
> Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
> The long way smoke beneath him in his fear.

We are thus ready for the entry of the gigantic Doorm. Tennyson presents him to us:

> Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,
> Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey.

With loud voice, like one hailing a ship, he rudely accosts Enid. If Geraint is not dead, why need she wail? If he is, then she is a fool—wailing will not bring him back to life, and her tears mar her beauty. He speaks as one to whom the higher emotions are entirely unknown and to whom death is an everyday sight. His predatory instinct is revealed in his command to look after Geraint's steed, his sensual nature in the lustful eye which he at once casts on Enid. But he is not one to let his plans be altered for the sake of a woman, and so, unlike the knight in the tale, he does not chivalrously escort Enid to his castle but proceeds on his foray. Geraint and Enid are entrusted to two brawny spearmen, as brutal and callous as their master. Angered at the thought of losing their share of the booty, on reaching the castle they throw down in haste the bier on which the wounded Geraint is lying and rush out, cursing him and Enid, their master, and their own souls.

It is noteworthy how Tennyson repeatedly emphasizes the nakedness of the hall. There is no sign of refinement, all is hard and uncouth like the Earl himself. The scene in the hall that follows the return of Doorm and his men strengthens

the impression already received. They hurl down their spears with a clatter; Doorm hammers on the table with the haft of his knife, while hogs and quarters of beeves are brought in and the hall is dim with steam. No word is spoken as they sit down and eat noisily, 'feeding like horses'. The gentle Enid shrinks from these bestial creatures, but Doorm, catching sight of her, urges her to eat, and in the presence of the crowd brazenly declares that were she not so pale, she might share his earldom. At this:

> The brawny spearman let his cheek
> Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared,

while the women with venomous tongue hiss in hate and jealousy. With low voice and drooping head, Enid merely asks to be left alone. Doorm, satisfied with his own graciousness, assumes that she has thanked him and urges her to eat and be glad. When she asks how she can be glad, the Earl in his fury carries her by main force to the table and thrusts the dish before her. This emphasis on Doorm's brutality springs from Tennyson's conception; the prototype in the tale 'many times desired her to eat'. To the poet we owe also the vivid picture of the Earl striding up and down the hall, gnawing now his upper, now his lower lip or his russet beard. It is characteristic of his mentality that he should think to win Enid by the gift of a beautiful robe. How can an earthy creature like this understand the pathetic appeal:

> Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be.
> I never loved, can never love but him.
> Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,
> He being as he is, to let me be.

Fidelity of this kind is beyond Doorm's ken and he answers with the argument most familiar to him—a blow. Such is Doorm, a vivid figure who seems to have stepped out of the reign of King Stephen, when men said in bitter despair that Christ and his saints slept, and this figure is entirely Tennyson's creation. The very antithesis of the Tennysonian ideal of reverence, wisdom, temperance, and self-control, Doorm is unforgettable.

The characters of Enid's father and mother are not drawn in such detail and yet they are less shadowy than in the tale. The mother's affection for and pride in her daughter and her weakness for dress are shown. Hence her silent indignation when Geraint insists on taking Enid to Arthur's court in a worn and faded gown. Even in adversity she cannot forget that she comes from

> a goodly house,
> With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,
> And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,
> And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all
> That appertains to noble maintenance.

Still more interesting than Tennyson's portrayal of the mother is his analysis of the father. Just as he underlines the baseness of Limours and Doorm, so he idealizes Yniol. In the tale Yniol is far from immaculate and indeed richly deserves the misfortune that comes upon him. His crime was that he seized the possessions of his nephew, with the result, as Yniol informs Geraint, that 'when he came to his strength, he demanded of me his property, but I withheld it from him. So he made war upon me, and wrested from me all that I possessed.' We are inclined to hold with the nephew and see no reason why the gallant and chivalrous Geraint of Tennyson's conception should intervene on behalf of this Yniol. Tennyson perceived the difficulty and fearing also that an unsympathetic Yniol might weaken the attraction of Enid, he completely altered the motives. The fault lies in the tempestuous character of the nephew, knowing which, Yniol rejects his suit for the hand of Enid. In revenge the nephew ousts him from his earldom and sacks the castle. This is all the more easily done, because, owing to his lavish hospitality, Yniol is reduced in means, and his servants are readily won over by large bribes. Our sympathy is thus transferred to Yniol, who is a pleasing, if somewhat weak personality. He lacks will-power and is so gentle that he lets men have their way. In his adversity he displays a similar passivity and meekly endures the wrongs inflicted on him, even at the risk of incurring contempt. The same paternal

care as led him to thwart his nephew is manifest when Geraint requests that Enid may be the lady whom he will uphold in the tournament. Yniol wishes that his wife shall first consult Enid's inclination, for

> a maiden is a tender thing
> And best by her that bore her understood.

What could be more natural and desirable than that an Yniol such as this should receive the help of Geraint?

It is above all upon the characters of Geraint and Enid and their interaction that Tennyson has bestowed his skill and artistry. Tennyson's Geraint is the flower of chivalry, and the problem which the poet has to solve is how to account for the hero's unkindness to Enid without destroying our belief in his noble qualities. In what measure and by what means he achieves this will be seen later. As for Enid, she is a very different personage from her counterpart in the *Mabinogion*. The latter embodies the medieval ideal of woman, unquestioning obedience to husband and parents, by whom she is treated accordingly. Tennyson's Enid, on the other hand, is no insignificant figure, and throughout the poem appears in the foreground more often than in the tale. We have an example in the first meeting of Geraint and Enid. The medieval narrator, describing Geraint's arrival at the hall of Yniol, says that he beheld 'a maiden, upon whom were a vest and a veil, that were old, and beginning to be worn out. And, truly, he never saw a maiden more full of comeliness, and grace, and beauty than she.' Conscious that this is one of the vital situations of his story, Tennyson gives it a greater amplitude and richness. As Geraint approaches, he hears Enid singing, and the description that ensues transcends the mundane and carries us away to the world of romance. Love as instantaneous and imperishable as that of Tristan for Isolt has come to Geraint:

> Here, by God's rood, is the one maid for me.

Subsequently in the tale Enid waits upon Geraint, even disarrays him, and gives his horse provender, all which Geraint seems to take for granted. In the poem Geraint's

chivalry prompts him to rise and help Enid in her task, and only reluctantly does he acquiesce when Yniol informs him that the custom of the house will not permit of a guest serving himself. Thus, owing to Tennyson's skilful presentation, in spite of Geraint's remissness, his reputation for courtesy is enhanced. Immediately after, the tale relates that Enid, having bought provisions in the town, apologizes for their inadequacy, and that Geraint answers curtly, 'It is good enough', an incident which Tennyson suppresses. Equally characteristic is the passage in the tale where Geraint asks leave to use the name of Enid in challenging the Knight of the Sparrow-Hawk. Her father answers, 'Gladly will I permit thee'. An echo of an age when a daughter's obedience was a matter of course. But Tennyson's Geraint in requesting this favour declares his admiration for Enid; it is not merely that for the purpose of the tournament he needs some lady to uphold. And Yniol's answer is that her own inclinations must first be discovered. After the tournament Yniol in the tale gives Enid away as he would one of his serfs or his goods and chattels, and Geraint is as curt and masterful as he. '"Chieftain, behold the maiden for whom thou didst challenge at the tournament, I bestow her upon thee." "She shall go with me", said Geraint, "to the Court of Arthur; and Arthur and Gwenhwyvar they shall dispose of her as they will. Let not the damsel array herself except in her vest and veil, until she come to the Court of Arthur, to be clad by Gwenhwyvar in such garments as she may choose."' The corresponding scene in Tennyson forms an illuminating contrast. Representing as it does another great crisis in Enid's life, it is dealt with fully, and her emotions are set forth in detail. The question of her attire is not so easy of solution as in the tale; we are no longer in the age of patient Griselda. Geraint says to her father:

> Earl, entreat her by my love,
> Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
> That she ride with me in her faded silk.

Even after this Geraint feels called upon to make elaborate apologies and explanations to Enid's mother. This prominence

of the women, the kindly consideration of Yniol and the deference of Geraint are altogether foreign to the tale. Again we seem to step back several centuries when, in the tale, after the first combat, Geraint once more enjoins silence upon Enid. '"I declare unto Heaven," said he, "if thou doest not thus, it will be to thy cost." "I will do, as far as I can, Lord", said she, "according to thy desire."' Of these threats and this slave-like obedience there is no trace in Tennyson. His Enid observes Geraint's commands, it is true, but not because she is cowed by a bully.

Not only has Tennyson modernized the relations of Geraint and Enid, he has made their actions more reasonable. The development of their love is traced step by step in a manner which the tale does not even attempt. Geraint, charmed by the singing of Enid, is completely won by her gentle demeanour and involuntarily his eyes follow her as she moves about the hall. As for Enid, she has often heard from her father of Geraint's exploits:

> This dear child hath often heard me praise
> Your feats of arms, and often when I paused
> Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear.

What more probable than that Enid, whose only suitors hitherto had been the drunken Limours and the arrogant Edyrn, should fall in love with the paragon of chivalry, Geraint?

Obviously Geraint and Enid move in a different atmosphere from their counterparts in the tale. They are idealized figures of romance and embody the Tennysonian ethical code. The process of idealization may be illustrated from the incident of the dwarf. In the original Geraint is on the point of slaying the dwarf, but refrains because his vengeance would still remain unsatisfied and also because the knight would immediately kill him in his defenceless state. All ignoble or even practical calculations are far from Tennyson's hero. He controls himself, such is

> his exceeding manfulness
> And pure nobility of temperament,
> Wroth to be wroth at such a worm.

It is the lofty nobility of Geraint's nature which causes the misunderstanding between him and Enid. He is always haunted by the fear that her intimacy with Guinevere, an intimacy which he himself had originally desired and encouraged, will contaminate her, and Tennyson gives him confirmation of his doubts in certain words uttered by Enid, which he overhears and misinterprets. Enid is musing and reproaches herself for not telling Geraint that men slander him by saying that he has become effeminate and neglects his duties as a ruler. 'O me, I fear that I am no true wife!' she says, and Geraint, waking at this moment, snatches at the words. Tennyson therefore makes Geraint's conduct more reasonable and in some measure justifiable. He is, moreover, careful to point out that even so, Geraint would not believe the worst of Enid:

> He loved and reverenced her too much
> To dream she could be guilty of foul act.

How significant it is also that when he orders Enid to follow him, he brings no open accusation against her. 'I charge thee, ask not', a delicacy unknown to his prototype, who tells Enid that, when his strength is gone, she can seek out him of whom she is thinking.

Thus Tennyson's Geraint sets out with conflicting emotions, and the poet has attempted to show the shifting phases of the struggle until the reconciliation is ultimately reached, a gradual and subtle process of which the tale gives but the slightest indications. He tells us Geraint's motive for sending Enid to ride ahead:

> Perhaps because he loved her passionately,
> And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,
> Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce
> Upon a head so dear in thunder.

Even in this crisis Geraint's tenderness checks his anger. After the first encounter he draws a little nearer to her, and regret begins to moderate his rage. With mingled feelings he watches her trying to manage the steeds of the dead knights. He would like to give vent to his wrath in one

wild outburst, but cannot bring himself to charge her with the least immodesty, and so it smoulders fiercely.

> Thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more
> That she could speak whom his own ear had heard
> Call herself false: and suffering thus he made
> Minutes an age.

Just before the second combat he cannot refrain from dropping a hint of his suspicion: 'If I fall, cleave to the better man', but after it is over he draws still closer to her.[1] In the episode of the mowers' dinner his latent affection is revealed. The tale makes the boy offer it of his own accord, but in Tennyson it is Geraint, who, observing the pallor of Enid and feeling distress at her fainting condition, begs the youth to let her eat. His first thought is of her in spite of his own gnawing hunger, which Tennyson is careful to emphasize.

Meanwhile we have not been left in ignorance of Enid's emotions. Stupefied at first, and wondering what her fault can be, she prays for Geraint's safety, starting at the whistle of the plover and trembling at the thought of an ambush. Though she respects his wishes, when danger threatens, with 'timid firmness' she disregards them and speaks. During the combats she suffers agonies of fear on Geraint's account. In the second she stands aside, not daring to watch,

> only breathe
> Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.

At times she falls into reverie, thinking of the past and in spite of Geraint's inexplicable behaviour, her love is unabated. In their room at night she bends tenderly over him, listening to his low and equal breathing and rejoicing that he is so far unscathed. Tennyson stresses her devotion by his description of her exhaustion and care-filled sleep:

[1] In the tale only after the third combat with robbers, omitted by Tennyson, is Geraint made to feel remorse. 'It grieved him as much as his wrath would permit, to see a maiden so illustrious as she having so much trouble with the care of the horses.' Still it does not prevent him from making her sit up all night to watch the horses while he sleeps.

> Overtoil'd
> By that day's grief and travel, evermore
> Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then
> Went slipping down horrible precipices,
> And strongly striking out her limbs awoke.

Her gentle manner and low, harmonious voice recall Cordelia in the concluding scenes of *King Lear*. Ever vigilant, she glides about at night 'among the heavy breathings of the house' like a 'household spirit'.

When the journey is resumed, though Geraint is sullen and suspicious, he does not repel Enid and rides much nearer to her than the day before. A new hope springs up in her heart, but the reconciliation is not yet.

> Geraint
> Waving an angry hand as who should say
> 'Ye watch me', sadden'd all her heart again.

And after the defeat of Limours he cruelly asks if they should strip her lover and if her palfrey would have the heart to bear the dead man's armour. Here for the first time Geraint resembles his medieval prototype.

However, the climax in the relations of Geraint and Enid is fast approaching. When Geraint is wounded by Limours and suddenly reels from his saddle, Enid shows her strength of mind. Without faltering she undoes his armour and binds up his wound, and only then does she burst into tears. When they are taken to the hall of Doorm, Enid sits by Geraint chafing his pale hands, calling to him, her warm tears falling on his face. Slowly he revives, but feigns death to test her to the uttermost and enjoy the knowledge that it is for him she weeps. It was perhaps partly for the sake of this scene that Tennyson, altering the tale, sent Doorm on a foray. The fact that the reader knows Geraint to be awake and listening, when Doorm afterwards bullies Enid, lends to the poem a dramatic tension lacking in the tale. After the sudden death of Doorm, Geraint makes an ample apology to Enid. He has done her wrong, but henceforth is hers; as a penance he will not ask what she meant by saying that she was no

true wife, but will die rather than doubt. And so the chivalrous nature which Tennyson set out to depict, after being obscured for a while, shines forth once more. Enid is too deeply moved for words, but her feelings are described at the supreme moment of reconciliation:

> And never yet, since high in Paradise
> O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,
> Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind
> Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous hour
> Put hand to hand beneath her husband's heart,
> And felt him hers again. She did not weep,
> But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist
> Like that which kept the heart of Eden green
> Before the useful trouble of the rain.

Just as Tennyson is far more concerned with the psychology of his characters than is the tale, so he bestows more pains upon vivid description. The sketches of the town and the ruined castle in *The Marriage of Geraint* owe nothing to the tale. At every turn, whether it be the description of the din made by the armourers or of some combat, one observes picturesque details which Tennyson has added and which invest the story with a new quality. Thus Geraint and Enid

> climb'd upon a fair and even ridge
> And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.

Geraint reaches the town, 'down the *long* street riding *wearily*', and afterwards 'o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones' he enters 'the dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall' of Yniol. And when Geraint and Enid set forth from their palace, they pass 'gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern'. A few passages from the tale and the poem, if we put them side by side, will show how much more vivid Tennyson can be.

The tale:

> They saw four armed horsemen come forth from the forest.

The poem:

> Enid was aware of three tall knights
> On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock
> In shadow, waiting for them.

The tale:

> A group of thickly tangled copse-wood.

The poem:

> In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,
> Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks.

The tale:

> They came to an open country, with meadows on one hand, and mowers mowing the meadows.

The poem:

> Issuing under open heavens beheld
> A little town with towers, upon a rock,
> And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased
> In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it.

Such little pictures, which seem to come straight from some old illuminated manuscript, Tennyson delighted in, and often, as here, they are elaborated from a mere hint in the original. Not less frequently they spring entirely from his own imagination, as when we read how Geraint

> remark'd
> The lusty mowers labouring dinnerless,
> And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning scythe,
> And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

Tennyson further enhances the poetic quality of his narrative by numerous similes which lend a splendour unknown to the workaday prose of the tale. Most of them are derived from Tennyson's close observation of Nature, and the reader is continually struck by their appropriateness. Geraint in his anger 'smiles like a stormy sunlight'; he glances at Enid 'as careful robins eye the delver's toil'; in his festive array he rides 'glancing like a dragon-fly'; the muscles on his arm slope 'as slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone, running too vehemently to break upon it'; his hard message to Enid falls 'like flaws in summer laying lusty corn'; and Enid struck by Doorm's unknightly hand, utters 'a sharp and bitter cry, As of a wild thing taken in the trap, Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood'. Edyrn on his first arrival at the

court of Arthur is 'as sullen as a beast new-caged', the lance of Geraint's foe splinters 'like an icicle', and the armourers at work make a noise

> As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
> Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks
> At distance, ere they settle for the night.

Very effective is the simile which compares the panic-stricken flight of Geraint's enemies to that of a shoal of fish, darting among the shallows, as soon as a hand is raised against the sun. Equally striking is the way in which the overthrow of another opponent is narrated:

> As he that tells the tale
> Saw once a great piece of a promontory
> That had a sapling growing on it, slide
> From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,
> And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew;
> So lay the man transfixt.

Two other similes, still more elaborate, may be mentioned, on which Tennyson has lavished all his wealth of melody and magic suggestion. The first describes the dress which Doorm offers Enid:

> A splendid silk of foreign loom,
> Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
> Play'd into green, and thicker down the front
> With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,
> When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
> And with the dawn ascending lets the day
> Strike where it clung; so thickly shone the gems.

The other occurs in the account of how Geraint, approaching the ruined hall of Yniol, hears the song of the invisible Enid:

> As the sweet voice of a bird,
> Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
> Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
> That sings so delicately clear, and make
> Conjecture of the plumage and the form;
> So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;
> And made him like a man abroad at morn
> When first the liquid note beloved of men

Comes flying over many a windy wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,
And he suspends his converse with a friend,
Or it may be the labour of his hands,
To think or say 'There is the nightingale'.

In many respects Tennyson's poem is undoubtedly superior to the tale in the *Mabinogion*. He has knitted the story more closely together, and by the omission of irrelevant details, particularly about ceremonies and genealogies, he has made the structure of the poem clearer. With this greater lucidity of outline there goes a more even flow of the narrative. Tennyson's *Enid* is also distinctive in that it is a study of character rather than a tale of adventure; the personages are more like human beings and less like the erratic, unaccountable creations of a fairy-tale. The poem likewise displays more skill than the original by revealing character, not only directly, but also through environment, material and human. Moreover, Tennyson's characters have an ethical value, a wider significance than those of the tale, and the poem is altogether more varied, vivid, dramatic, and radiant with poetic beauty. And yet the transformation is not all gain. There is an artless, unsophisticated charm about the tale, which of necessity evaporates in the more subtle and resplendent world of Tennyson. Nor does the tale know anything of the sentimentality to which at times Tennyson draws dangerously near. However, the feeling which predominates after a comparison of *Enid* with the Welsh original is that of admiration for so consummate an artist.

Though Tennyson's familiarity with the *Mabinogion* was of incomparably greater importance to him than his knowledge of other Welsh literature, one cannot fail to note his obligations to Llywarch Hên and the *Triads*. It was the reading of Llywarch's famous lament over the fallen Geraint that determined the way in which Tennyson ended his *Enid*. The tale in the *Mabinogion* closes with a picture of Geraint's prosperous reign, during which his 'warlike fame and splendour lasted with renown and honour'. But Tenny-

son, bearing in mind Llywarch's elegy upon Geraint after the great struggle at Llongborth, describes how he

> fell
> Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
> In battle.

As for the *Triads*, there are signs in various poems that Tennyson knew something of these singular and characteristic productions of Welsh literature. One of them is to be found in *The Marriage of Geraint*, where Enid's mother, admiring the beauty of her daughter, declares her

> Sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,
> Flur, for whose love the Roman Caesar first
> Invaded Britain,

and she proceeds to contrast the repulse of the invading Caesar with the feeling of welcome that she entertains towards the new conqueror, Geraint, who is to carry off Enid. In this passage Tennyson diverges from the genuine Welsh tradition, which tells that the beautiful Flur was taken captive by Mwrchan, a Gaulish prince in alliance with Caesar, to whom he intended to present his prize. In his anger Caswallawn, as Cassivelaun was called in Welsh, led an army of sixty-one thousand men against Julius Caesar, which did not return with its leader, and hence was known as one of the three emigrant hosts of Britain. It was possibly in order to win a parallel to the story of Geraint and Enid that Tennyson assigned to Julius Caesar and Flur a relation somewhat different from that given in Welsh legend.[1]

Another reference to the *Triads* occurs in *Gareth and Lynette*, where Merlin asks:

> Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards:
> 'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
> Elusion, and occasion, and evasion'?

By the riddling of the bards is meant the *Triads*, which

[1] Exactly where he found this legend we do not know but conceivably in Lady Guest's notes to 'Branwen the Daughter of Llyr' in her translation of the *Mabinogion* (1849, vol. iii, pp. 139-40), where reference is made to the *Triads* from which it sprang.

Tennyson in *The Coming of Arthur* calls 'the riddling triplets of old time'. It is in this connexion that Merlin utters three obscure stanzas, ending with the well-known line:

From the great deep to the great deep he goes.

In a note to the collected edition of Tennyson's works we are given an explanation of Merlin's words. 'The truth appears in different guise to divers persons. The one fact is that man comes from the great deep and returns to it', and, the note continues, 'this is an echo of the triads of the Welsh bards'.[1]

There is some reason for thinking that Tennyson may have known the *Triads* which Southey quoted in the notes to his *Madoc*.[2] At any rate both poets were familiar with another tradition, current among the old Welsh bards, namely, that every ninth wave is greater than those going before it. Tennyson makes use of it in the magnificent passage which relates the coming of Arthur. Bleys and Merlin his disciple,

[1] The triad from which Tennyson evolved his memorable line runs thus: 'Animated Beings have three states of Existence, that of Inchoation in the Great Deep or Lowest Point of Existence; that of Liberty in the State of Humanity; and that of Love, which is happiness in Heaven'. Attention is drawn to this by Professor O. L. Jiriczek (*Anglia, Beiblatt*, 1926, p. 120), who also points out another triad which, although Tennyson does not mention it, would surely appeal to him in his symbolical interpretation of the Arthurian legend. It runs thus: 'There are three necessary occasions of Inchoation: to collect the materials and properties of every nature; to collect the knowledge of every thing; and to collect power towards subduing the Adverse and Devastative, and for the divestation of Evil'.

[2] Professor Jiriczek suggests this and one may regard it as probable. It is perhaps worth noting that Edward Williams, the source of Southey's information about the *Triads*, in his *Poems Lyric and Pastoral* (London, 1794), vol. ii, quotes that relating to the three states of existence, but whereas he uses the word 'felicity', 'happiness' is used by Southey and also by Rowe in the commentary which Tennyson authorized. This might of course be a mere coincidence, but on the other hand Tennyson's knowledge of the tradition of the ninth wave, a tradition mentioned in the notes to *Madoc* and apparently derived by Southey from the Welsh scholars Edward Williams and William Owen Pughe, does seem to indicate that Tennyson had profited by the reading of *Madoc*.

leaving the castle of Tintagil, where Uther has just passed away moaning for an heir, descend through the inky darkness towards the shore. As they gaze seawards they catch a glimpse of a ship like a winged dragon, all bright with shining figures :

> And then the two
> Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
> Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
> Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
> And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
> Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;
> And down the wave and in the flame was borne
> A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
> Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried, 'The King!'

HERBERT G. WRIGHT.

ANCRENE WISSE AND *HALI MEIÐHAD*

I

THE *Ancrene Wisse* has already developed a 'literature', and it is very possible that nothing I can say about it will be either new or illuminating to the industrious or leisured that have kept up with it. I have not. But my interest in this document is linguistic, and unless I am mistaken, a purely linguistic aspect of the problem will bear renewed attention, or repetition. I even believe that it may be of value to set forth a line of argument that is based on assertions of which the proper proof (or retractation) must wait for a later occasion.

I start with the conviction that very few Middle English texts represent in detail the real language (in accidence, phonology, often even in choice of spellings) of any one time or place or person. It is not to be expected that they should, in a period of manuscript reproduction and linguistic decentralization; and most of them in fact do not. Their 'language' is, in varying degrees, the product of their textual history, and cannot be fully explained, sometimes cannot be understood at all by reference to geography.

If this is not universally agreed, it cannot here be fully argued. At least it will be allowed, whether by those who prefer to find a place on the map for each variety of 'textual' English, or those that would find subtle phonetic significance in all the vagaries of careless texts, that there is a distinction between a pure and consistent form of language and a confused one, and that the distinction is important, however explained. This will still leave some force in my argument.

The mixed nonce-language produced by copying is something different, and something to a considerable extent distinguishable by analysis from the variations, the exceptional forms requiring special explanation, that appear in, say, the language of Orm or Dan Michel—where we may assume that

we have for practical purposes a representation of two kinds of 'geographical' English. For one thing these exceptions are mainly exceptions only to the general character of the language and the normal lines of its descent from older forms, not exceptions to the writer's usage. He uses them invariably, or in specific cases, or in circumstances capable of reasonable explanation. In fact they are comparable to the observed variations in the living speech of actual persons and places.

'Nonce-language' can, of course, be produced in two different ways. By partial substitution of a dialect or spelling-system more familiar than that of the copy; by unsuccessful assimilation of a natural speech to a written 'standard', more or less definite. But to distinguish these is probably not, at any rate in early Middle English, of linguistic importance. The result of both is an 'accidental' form of language, occurring in all its details only in one text, whose evidence thus requires careful handling if it is to be used in the history of spoken English. Attempted 'standardization' is not likely to concern a student of the thirteenth century; he is more likely to be faced with the alteration of the unfamiliar.[1]

But texts such as the *Ormulum* or the *Ayenbite of Inwit*, where all may believe in the language as genuine and more or less 'geographical', are rare. We have not enough of them for the separating out of the different main types that are

[1] In the thirteenth century a westernizing tendency has been discerned, I think with probability. It does not, of course, amount to the existence of a West Midland literary standard. But many of the problems of thirteenth-century texts (e. g. *The Owl and Nightingale*) would become more intelligible on the assumption, natural enough *a priori*, that the habit of using or writing down English with any definitely literary purpose was at first preserved in the West mainly, and connected with the lingering there of links with the past (in alliteration and all that implies, in spelling, and in an archaic and relatively undisturbed form of language); that scribes able to handle M.E. familiarly were more often trained in the West and natively or otherwise familiar with western English. Consideration of *Ancrene Wisse*, at any rate, strengthens the impression, if my argument is sound, of the existence in the west of a centre where English was at once more alive, and more traditional and organized as a written form, than anywhere else.

ingredients in cases of confusion. All the more reason for underlining the names of those that we have.

There is an English older than Dan Michel's and richer, as regular in spelling as Orm's but less queer; one that has preserved something of its former cultivation. It is not a language long relegated to the 'uplands' struggling once more for expression in apologetic emulation of its betters or out of compassion for the lewd, but rather one that has never fallen back into 'lewdness', and has contrived in troublous times to maintain the air of a gentleman, if a country-gentleman. It has traditions and some acquaintance with books and the pen, but it is also in close touch with a good living speech—a soil somewhere in England.

This is the language first and foremost of the Corpus Christi MS. of the *Ancrene Wisse*, the *Ancrene Wisse* proper. This manuscript is of course admitted to be a good text (the clerical errors in it are astonishingly few); and it is well known to be in a fair hand of excellent regularity and precision. It is even allowed to stand nearer to the original than, say, the Cotton Nero MS. But I suggest that this is not nearly strong enough. Whatever the textual history of the *Ancrene Wisse* may be, or the merits and interest of its matter, this text has an even more unusual claim to attention. Its language is self-consistent and unadulterated. It is a unity. It is either a faithful transcript of some actual dialect of nearly unmixed descent, or a 'standard' language based on one.

But this, if true, possesses an interest for others than the linguistic analyst. Such a fact must have a bearing on the questions where and when, and so even on the more academic questions by and for whom, that are put concerning the writing of the Rule. If it is true, we may argue thus:

(i) A is written in a language (A) that is at once self-consistent and markedly individual. It stands out among Middle English texts, not excluding the *Ayenbite* or the *Ormulum*, by reason of the regularity of its phonology and its accidence. It represents, therefore, a form of English whose development from an antecedent Old English type

was relatively little disturbed. Relative isolation and more or less definite natural boundaries are suggested by this.

(ii) This language is expressed in a very consistent and in some ways very individual spelling.

(iii) These considerations taken together suggest a simple textual history, or at least a peculiarly fortunate one.[1] The normal result of varied copying in such a period as the Middle English one would be to destroy the consistency of language and spelling, *unless the scribe or scribes used naturally the same language as that of their originals.* At any rate this 'normal result' is admittedly present in all the other versions of the *Ancrene Wisse.* All of these have in fact the appearance of a blending with the language (A) of ingredients belonging to different times and places. The (A) element is their common linguistic element.[2] This throws into still stronger relief the absence of such blending in A.

Here I think we have to consider a further point. It is not an entirely new one, though, unless I am mistaken, its force is not usually appreciated. This language (A) is identical, even down to minute and therefore significant details, with the language of MS. Bodley 34, that is, of the versions there contained of the legends of *Juliene, Katerine, Margarete,* and of the homilies *Sawles Warde* and *Hali Meiðhad.* This is the so-called 'Katherine group'. The '*Hali Meiðhad* group' would have been a fitter title. I will call it here B; its language (B).

A connexion between (A) and (B) is of course recognized. Hall, for instance, said that 'MS. B bears a close resemblance in all dialectal criteria to MS. A of the *Ancrene Wisse*', though he declared its 'Anglian peculiarities are somewhat more pronounced' (a judgement I do not understand).[3] A vague recognition of the similarity is hidden away in pages 7

[1] There is no analysable difference that I can discover between those parts of A which are absent from other versions, or differ from them, and the common mass. The whole is in language (A).

[2] This is not universally agreed.

[3] *E. M. E.*, ii, p. 503.

and 8 of Jordan's *M.E. Grammatik*. But the case is far more remarkable and important. At the very least we have here a closeness of relationship between the language and the spelling of two distinct MSS. and hands that is astonishing, if not (as I believe) unique. I will even suggest here that the unity of (A) and (B) will bear minute analysis, and leave a residuum of discrepancy which, in view of the quite different textual history and value of B. is negligible. The two manuscripts are in fact in one language and spelling (AB). And this is found, as far as I am aware, nowhere else. That is, though it may be even a preponderating element in other texts, especially other versions of the same matter, it is not elsewhere found in isolation; nowhere else is it present in so consistent and regular a form, and in all its details of grammar and spelling.

The nearest approach that I know of is to be found in the R versions[1] of B's material (all the above named except *Hali Meiðhad*). Nearly identical ('substantially the same' was Hall's judgement) as R's language appears at first sight with (AB), it is not, especially in spelling, actually the same. Its closeness to B, which is a copy of the same matter, cannot be compared with the linguistic relationship of B to A, which are totally distinct in matter. Its very closeness to B can be made to illustrate the peculiar relationship of B to A. If one is thoroughly familiar with the idiosyncrasies of A, one may then look at, say, Einenkel's text of *St. Katherine* (which is chiefly based on R) and mark, without reference to the apparatus, the majority of the cases in which the printed text diverges in forms or spellings from B, and probably predict what the apparatus will show the B forms to be. That is, language (B) may be learned through (A), or vice versa. This is my own experience.

I suggest that this sort of thing is not usual in Middle English, and requires special consideration. We have two scribes that use a language and spelling that are nearly as indistinguishable as that of two modern printed books. Since the conditions in Middle English were quite different to those

[1] MS. B. Mus. Royal 17 A 27.

of the present, it is a reasonable further step to suppose that A and B are very closely connected both in time and place. The consistency and individuality of the spelling, since it is shared by two hands of very different quality, is not that of an Orm, of an isolated methodist, but suggests obedience to some school or authority.

There have been, of course, at different times various localizations and datings, vague or specific, of the *originals* of the works contained in A and B. They have been assigned to places as widely sundered as Dorset, Lichfield, and the 'Northern border of the (East) Midlands'. But, if I am right, the A and B *versions* are not to be separated at all.

How much further one would go after this depends on one's views of transmission in the Middle English period. At any rate it is clear that, if any of the parts of A or pieces in B were not originally composed in this dialect, in the time and place to which the manuscripts belong, they were then and there not only copied but accurately translated—so accurately that there is practically no trace left of the process.[1]

I suggest, then, that the very nature of the language (AB) requires us in all probability to suppose, either:

(i) that A or B or both are originals.

This can only be decided on other grounds; in the case of B, at any rate, no claim for originality could be made.

or (ii) that A or B or both are in whole or part accurate translations, a phenomenon that requires special explanation.

or (iii) that the vanished originals of A and B were *in this same language* (AB), and so belonged to practically the same period and place as the copies we have (unless alie have transcribed them with minute linguistic fidelity).

[1] No linguistic trace, that is. Textual considerations are not here concerned. B may offer an indifferent text, and evidence that it is more or less removed in this respect from its originals, but it does not offer an indifferent language. This is either that of the originals or there has been accurate translation—the unlikelihood of which is only increased by the assumption of an inaccurate text.

In the case of A, then, either (i) A is the original *Ancrene Wisse* (here only a supposition for the sake of argument); or (ii) A is a linguistically skilful translation of some version of it, which may contain additions and alterations due to the actual translator; or (iii) the original *Ancrene Wisse* was in language (AB), and therefore belonged to nearly the same time and place as A, and any intermediate stages there may have been. If the matter peculiar to A is unoriginal, it belongs at least to very nearly the same time and place as the original, and possesses so much the more authority. It may even constitute a second edition within the knowledge of the author.

In the case of B we have not probably to deal either with an original or with an original translation, but with a copy of pieces that were severally either originally composed in language (AB), or translated into it at some previous time not far removed from the making of B, and in the place to which B belongs.

But we can dismiss some of these suppositions as highly improbable, if not incredible. There is very little evidence, I think, in Middle English of accurate *transcription* of unfamiliar dialect. Nor is it to be expected. It is notoriously easy to adulterate a closely related and generally intelligible form of the same language (dialectal or archaic), even when the intention is consciously the reverse. Yet scribes, save in exceptional circumstances (e. g. forgery), were concerned with matter, not linguistic detail. If they were not merely inattentive, in which case familiar forms would creep in unnoticed, they were more likely deliberately to substitute the familiar than to preserve the unusual. In the absence of a standard they must often have failed even to observe, let alone to consider important, many orthographic and linguistic details that our analysis regards as fundamental. It needs constant attention to each word if a piece of text that differs from the copyist's own language or spelling habits is to be preserved unadulterated. This is tested easily enough by copying, say, either a piece of earlier modern English, or an Old Norse MS. In both cases the divergences

between the copy and the copyist's habits have little or no bearing on meaning and matter, and some special motive is required if they are to be retained consistently.

On the other hand, for consistent and accurate *translation* of one M.E. dialect into another a knowledge in detail is demanded of both dialects, as well as a recognition that they are distinct forms of language—a philological state of mind, rather than a scribal. And there is still required a special motive for taking the necessary trouble. What motive or special circumstance can be suggested that will make the supposition of 'accurate translation' in any way credible for A and B? Such translation can only be explained if the form of language substituted was held to have some special value, was in fact somewhere a 'standard' that it was worth considerable pains to maintain. This is possible, if not very probable, in the abstract. But in the case, at any rate, of B it is hardly worth considering. B is not the text that would be produced by a person capable of such pains. And if we examine the other versions of B, I submit that it is language (AB) that lies behind each of them, not some other type from which B or its immediate antecedents were 'translated'.

I also submit, though the case is far more intricate and totally different conclusions have been reached, that the same is true of A; that the least forced explanation of the linguistic state of the other versions of the *Ancrene Wisse* is that behind them, at different removes, lies an original in language (AB).

Yet even if this is not to be demonstrated or agreed, I suggest that the supposition of 'translation', as the explanation of the purity of the language (AB) in A and B, remains far less probable or credible than the belief that the originals of A and B were in the same language and spelling (AB), and therefore belonged to much the same time and place. It is a belief which is at least supported by the connexion that is thus established between the nature of the language and spelling of these texts on the one hand, and their literary and stylistic quality on the other. Both point to a place where

native tradition was not wholly confused or broken; both point to a centre where the native language was not unfamiliar with the pen; it is not surprising if they both point to the same place.

I believe then that, if what is here asserted concerning the character and relations of languages (A) and (B) is true (my present conviction), it is far and away the most probable deduction that A and B are substantially in the very language of the original works, and belong to the same place and at least approximately the same time as those works and their authors (or author). To a linguist they are, in other words, virtually originals.

There are two possible modifications of this deduction that have not yet been dealt with: the relations of the linguistic date of (AB) to the palaeographic dates of A and B; and the question of originals not in Middle English at all.

It might, for instance, be convenient to some theory of authorship to suppose that the originals of A and B were written considerably earlier than the date assignable on palaeographic grounds (or internal evidence) to the manuscripts.

The linguistic comment on any such theory would, to my mind, be this. There is little trace in (AB) of mixture of forms of periods sufficiently separate in time to differ in orthographic or linguistic usage.[1] But the scribe who resists successfully the tendency to modernize, not in a legal instrument but in a work intended precisely for the instruction of his contemporaries, is incredible. It is highly improbable therefore that (AB) is a language already archaic or even old-fashioned when either A or B were made. In that case only the supposition remains that the modernization has been thorough, accurate, and deliberate. But this is only a special case of the 'translation' dealt with above. The period of time intervening, therefore, between the originals and the copies A, B, is not likely to have been one linguistically measurable. What sort of limit in years this would involve

[1] Occasional uses of ȝ for *g*, of *s* for *r*, might be instanced, but do not prove much.

round about A.D. 1200 is less easy to say; and we have to consider in this case the greater resistance to change of a language that was probably (as suggested above) both relatively isolated and cultivated. None the less I think that we should not on linguistic grounds willingly concede more than a decade or two; and on this point I shall try to bring forward a sample of linguistic evidence (below).

Further it might be suggested, and has been, and still is, that the originals of A and B were not English at all, but French or Latin. The case of B is not debated. Some of the pieces (e. g. *Sawles Warde*) are known to be translations, or rather free handlings, of Latin sources. But the treatment observed is so free as to rob it of almost all linguistic interest; it is of a kind that produces language little if anything inferior to that of free composition, and it is almost equally good evidence of the literary cultivation of the English medium; it is not novice translation-prose at all.

It is quite possible that where the English originals of B were so produced A also might have been translated, though A appears to rise even higher above the suspicion of being translation-prose. But the proof, one way or the other, is outside the scope of linguistic analysis. This debate belongs to a different field.[1]

[1] It might, however, be observed that certain odd genders occur in both A and B. *deað* is, for instance, occasionally feminine in A and B. Where the genders of nouns are discernible and yet different from those of O.E. they follow Latin or French. So I believe, but I have not made full collections on this point. It might be worth while, if it has not already been done. This might be taken as an indication of translation. Yet it is difficult to believe that such competent translation would in fact make such errors. If ascribable to the influence of French or Latin at all, such confusion of genders is more likely to be the reflection of the general influence of a knowledge of these languages upon this cultivated sort of English. English of this period was more open to attack in the accidence of nouns and adjectives than anywhere else. In other words, we may have here a genuine minor feature of the language (AB) such as might appear in talking—an actual example of one of the stages in the history of the loss of gender of which historical grammars

Proof or supposition of a foreign original still requires us in tracing the history of the English version to follow the same line of argument from the nature of the language (AB) as that already laboured. The final conclusion that I suggest is that the (English) originals of these works were in language (AB), they both belonged to nearly the same time, one not far removed from that of the actual manuscripts A and B; and they both belonged to the same (small) area, the area where manuscripts A and B and their language (AB) were at home.

The localization or dating of either the manuscripts, or the language, of A and B is then of much greater importance to the general problem of the *Ancrene Wisse* than has been allowed.

I am not equipped, nor have I studied the question of this localization sufficiently, to venture an opinion. It is none the less, to say no more, highly suggestive that A alone of the manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse* is definitely connected with Herefordshire, and that the same is true of B. It is certainly odd that two manuscripts, which at the very least have every appearance of being closely connected in place of origin, should both have wandered to that somewhat remote county in the fourteenth century, if they did not originally belong there. Historians and others may decide whether Herefordshire could offer the centre we require; there are, at any rate, many linguistic considerations that are in its favour, and none yet to hand (so far as I am aware) that are against it.[1] There

speak but seldom furnish instances. A specially interesting case is, I think, furnished by *Hali Meiðhad* 148 ff. There *flesch* is referred to as *ha* 'she'. This has completely misled the modern English translator, who writes nonsense; and has also misled the scribe into misuse of the pl. form *hearmið* 148 for the required sg. *hearmeð* (*ha* also means 'they').

[1] The Scandinavian element, has, of course, been used as an argument against the West in general. Though we, or rather I, do not know enough about the distribution of words in Middle English to speak with finality, where phonology does not help, I believe this to be altogether erroneous. Hall was led, for instance, by the Scandinavian element to

is 'relative isolation', which endures to this day, between Wye and Severn, where an individual linguistic development might be expected to take place little disturbed, and yet show intelligible geographical relation to the forms of English that seem most nearly allied (e.g. Layamon); there is proximity to Wales—a minor point, but *cader* occurs in *Hali Meiðhad* and *Ancrene Wisse* only; there is remoteness from the East and from London, which may explain the preservation of

look in the N.E. Midlands for author and originals. Yet if anything suggests itself to a general consideration of this element, it is that its connexion is nearly as close with western tradition and alliteration as that of the native element.

The view of Hall and others appears to have been that the Scandinavian words in A and B are a N.E. element found in their copies, but alien to the language of the 'translators'—who thus could only have knowledge of the words from the spelling and context of a written N.E. original. Then what are we to think of these scholarly westerners? Not content with being the most efficient dialect translators in M.E. they transform alien Norse words from their natural eastern shape into precisely the form they should have had if they were ancestral in the West. Somewhere in Herefordshire there must have been a school of philology, which encouraged phonology as well as a study of genuine Norse rather than its corruption in eastern England. I refer, of course, to such words as *flutten*, *hulien*, which in the East were pronounced and written with *i* (Orm *flittenn*), though derived from O.N. *flytia*, *hylia*. The ending of *hulien* is also decisively against the East, see Part II. *meoc* might also be adduced. The *eo*-spelling is invariable, and marks out the word at once to the eye in (AB), since it does not conform, owing to its later adoption from O.N. **meuk-r*, to the 'Anglian smoothing' characteristic of the language (O.E. *sēoc* is *sec*). How was this correct historical and phonetic distinction observed, if not guided by colloquial knowledge? Orm's spelling *meoc* cannot explain it, for it is not invariable; he also writes *mec*, *mek*. And there is small likelihood of any easterly text ever having existed that surpassed Orm in consistency, especially in the application of the combination *eo*, when we consider that in the East, if any phonetic distinction lingered between *e* and *eo*, it was slight and of a different kind from that preserved in the West. But if Norse words phonologically testable resist the attempt to derive them from written N.E. texts, the remainder will require strong evidence indeed of limited distribution before they can be used as an argument. A and B are rather documents for a history of the Scandinavian element in England, than to be explained away so as to fit a previous view of its distribution.

something of old tradition and the archaism; and there is the intimate relation of the vocabulary and formulas (alliterative and other) in A and B both to the westerly lyric, whose little world lay between Wirral and the Wye,[1] and to the specifically alliterative verse.

I have not dared to apply my linguistic theory to the questions 'by whom' and 'for whom'. It can clearly say little here except indirectly and through the answers to 'where' and 'when'. 'By whom' and 'for whom' are sentimental questions, and knowledge at any rate of the latter is not likely to have any importance to scholarship. Neither is likely to be answered with certainty by any form of research, short of miraculous luck. If one considers the throngs of folk in the fair field of the English centuries, busy and studious, learned and lewd, esteemed and infamous, that must have lived without leaving a shred of surviving evidence for their existence, one will hesitate before the most ingenious guesses of the most untiring researchers at the names and identities of the original Canterbury pilgrims. The 'dear sisters' are as little likely to have left a record in this world. Their instructor is in more hopeful case; yet (even in Herefordshire) there may have been more than one wise clerk who left no monument, or left a monument without a name.

Linguistic analysis at any rate will not help us in a search for him, save in indicating the probable time and place to look in. Though personally I entirely agree with all that Hall said (*E. M. E.*, ii. 505 f.) concerning the community of authorship of A and B (not his identification), and think it as probable as any such theory can be,[2] it must be admitted

[1] From Weye he is wisist in to Wyrhale, *Johon* 27.

[2] The difference in spirit between the manner and matter of A and B has become a commonplace, but depends on a forgetfulness of the very nature of an anchoress's life and the spirit that approved it (as the instructor must have done), and on a misunderstanding of the teaching and spirit of B, an exaggeration of the 'humanity' of A the practical adviser and of the 'inhumanity' of B the furnisher of edifying reading. Flagellation, which A disapproves, is not more stern than enclosure and

that the linguistic character of the texts does not oblige us to believe in a common author. Where two different scribes could write a common language in the same spelling, two different authors could conceivably have written under the influence of a common training, reading, and tradition.

II

It was originally my intention to follow this laborious argument with a sample of a minute comparison of A and B. But this has proved impossible of satisfactory accomplishment within a very little space. To give a brief list of the peculiar agreements in language and spelling between the two texts, without recording and discussing the minor discrepancies, would also be unconvincing, though the agreement might be conceded as remarkable.

I may briefly instance, however, one line of inquiry and its bearings. The most important group of words in any early M.E. text (if one considers date or region, or text corruption, or is concerned with the general processes of grammatical history in Middle English) is that of the verbs belonging to the 3rd or 'regular' weak class, descended from O.E. verbs with infinitive in *-ian*, or conjugated on this model.[1]

A and B together contain some 550 of these verbs in over 3,300 instances. Of these more than 280 are descended from recorded O.E. verbs; about 150 are M.E. verbs (by chance not recorded in O.E., or recent formations from current nouns and adjectives, or words of obscure origin); about 20 are Norse, and about 100 French. A study of these 3,300 instances allows one to establish for AB a regular paradigm to which

virginity which he rigidly protects. Juliene endures brutal flagellation; but that one who finds this edifying should discourage its voluntary practice is no more surprising than a man who honours courage in battle while advising caution in crossing the street.

[1] This I hope to expound elsewhere at greater length and with special reference to AB.

only about 6 exceptions per 1,000 instances can be found and many of these have a significance in being consistently employed and being common to A and B.[1]

This regular paradigm is simply the O.E. paradigm preserved in all its details, except as modified by one or two normal phonetic changes of universal application: namely, (1) the weakening of unaccented vowels to *e*; (2) the change of *i(ȝ)e* to *ī* after a long or polysyllabic stem, while *ie* remained after a short stem, or short stem that received a strong secondary accent (*óndswèrien*). The latter 'sound-law' is of great importance to the history of M.E. inflexion. The verbs studied provide between one and two thousand instances of its operation, and a recognition of this can be made of considerable service to etymology. The proportion of exceptions is almost negligible, and such as exist are usually capable of explanation.

We have in fact a regular relation between *polien* [*ich polie, he poleð, ha polieð*, imper. *pole, polieð*, subj. *polie(n)*, pres. p. *poliende*] and *fondin* [*ich fondi, he fondeð, ha fondið*, imper. *fonde, fondið*, subj. *fondi(n)*, pres. p. *fondinde*].

This is remarkable enough, and sufficient evidence at once of a relatively undisturbed dialect and of a text little adulterated linguistically. But its full force is best appreciated if one seeks to discover the same rules in other manuscripts of A or B. There is no space here to demonstrate this. But very little examination of the manuscripts is required. R comes best out of such a test—its distinction from (AB) is not observable so much in this point as in other more minute points of phonology and spelling. The confusion of the others varies in degree. T is, of course, without any rules, and cannot even keep steady in the employment of *-eð, -es, -en,*

[1] For instance, *schawin*, to show, forms (under the influence probably of *edeawen*) the irregular imperative *schaw*, and pa. t. *schawde*. Both these 'exceptions' are regular in A and B—there is one instance only of *schawede* (in *Sawles Warde*). Compare the 'consistent irregularity' of the remarkable AB paradigm *warpen* (throw): *warpe*; pa. t. *weorp*; pl. and subj. *wurpe(n)*; pp. *iwarpen*. This has no exceptions in AB, and no consistent parallels outside.

let alone observe a distinction between *ie* and *i*. Its scribe may or may not have belonged to Shropshire or other places where he has been placed (on linguistic evidence!), but his grammar belongs to no place but MS. T. The irregularity of the Caius MS. and of Nero can be gauged by a glance at the specimens in Hall's *Early Middle English*.

This development could, I believe, also be made to yield conclusions concerning date. It is obvious that the *i* forms depend on earlier *ie* forms, and that a text regularly preserving *ie* in all verbs of this class is probably older than one in which *ie* has diverged into *i* and *ie*. How far we are to assume different rates of *phonetic change* (as distinct from changes due to grammatical analogy) in different regions in the Middle English period, is a difficult question. In the West in closely related areas a different rate of change is unlikely.

Now the change *iȝe* > *ī* is already observable in Orm (*laffdiȝ*)—his verbal forms *lokenn*, &c., are not phonetic developments. A greater rate of change in his area may be conceded. But if we come west, we discover that as we approach the date 1200 we get not *fondin/polien* but *fondien/polien*. This latter is substantially the state of the language of the longer Layamon text, and one of the points in which that confused document shows analysable regularity. The same is true of such 'O.E. Homilies' as the Sermon for the First Sunday in Lent (*O.E. Hom.* i, pp. 28 ff.), a text which has, as a main ingredient, language related in some remarkable ways to AB (*kimeð, bluðeliche, eskien* are examples).

The *Owl and Nightingale* (C) observes much the same rules as AB, with a few exceptions, but it contains at least one specifically 'Kentish' form *wnienge* [= *wunienge*] 614. This curious form is the norm in early Kentish, where similar rules to those of AB can be observed. [The differences are (1) change of *i* to *e* before *ð* (*fandi* but *fandeð*); (2) *wunienge* for AB *wununge*. The latter is due to regularizing the relations of *fandi(n)*, *fandinge* to *wunien*, **wuninge*.]

An analysis of all the early M.E. texts on this basis pro-

vides interesting results, which it is impossible to exhibit here. Among these are the demonstration that the most important cleavage in M.E. was between the areas (W. and S.) where the O.E. system of verbs was retained and slowly modified phonetically, and those where it was violently dislocated and remodelled before the M.E. period proper began. Orm represents the latter. It is clear that his *lokenn* and *polenn* are not phonetic developments. The phonetic developments are seen in *laffdiȝ*, and the plural adjective *wurrþiȝ* (beside *manie*). By pure phonetic development we should say *warny, groany* to this day. In the Scandinavianized part of England the complete divergence in conjugation between English and Norse verbs in *-ian, -ia* (*fandian, fandode: eggia, eggiaðe: krefia, krafte*), and their relative rarity in Norse, had led to a general levelling, probably in late O.E. times, in favour of *-an* for all. Of this late O.E. 'lingua franca' with its **lufan*, **fandan* one example has, by chance, been preserved—on the dial on Kirkdale Church (Yorks.) dating from about A.D. 1064.[1]

Where English remained intact, and the few Scandinavian verbs were fitted into the native system (mostly being absorbed by the *fondin* or *polien* classes), we had, until the thirteenth century was well advanced, a regular development from O.E., which is clearly observable where the text is pure. The particular stage represented by AB cannot in the West, I suggest, be put back much before 1225, if as far. It is possible that English would long have halted at some such stage (slightly modified by complete loss of *-n*, perhaps, and change of *-ith* to *-eth*), had the cultivation of English remained in the West. How far this stage could be preserved even in the fourteenth century in a rustic and archaic dialect, Dan Michel shows. None the less it is clear that the stage was one of

[1] See A. R. Green, *Sundials* (S.P.C.K. 1926), p. 14. The inscription reads at the sides: Orm . gamal . | suna bohte . sc̄s | gregorivs min | ster . ꝺonne . hi|t wes æl . to . bro || can . 7 tofalan . 7 he | hit let *macan* newan from | grunde xpe . 7 s̄c̄s gregori|vs . in . eadward . dagum . cn̄g . in tosti . dagum . eorl. In the centre: þis is dæ-ges solmere æ [merce ?] | æt ilcum tide . 7 hawarꝺ me wrohte 7 brand p̄rs.

delicate balance easily disturbed, and one that would certainly fail to be understood by any scribe or speaker not instinctively guided by the usage of his mother-dialect. Endless confusion would be certain to arise (and did arise) wherever a scribe and his copy differed in the matter of these verbs. The mere statistics of regularity in this respect in AB preclude us, therefore, from supposing with any probability that these texts are copies of originals of an older period (*fondien* text and *fondin* scribe; or *fondin* text and *fonden* scribe[1]). There is only one (very doubtful) case of *ie* after a long stem in all AB.[2] There are a very few certain cases of *-e* for *-i*, but their percentage is minute, and most of them are explicable as accidental errors, or the occasional false analogies of speech and writing[3]:

[1] A stage *fonde(n)/luuie(n)* was reached, later than AB and not then universally, by substitution of the *e*-endings of all other classes of verbs for the *i*-endings. The change was not phonetic, at any rate in the case of final *-i*. It led also to the generalization of *luui-* as the stem (later M.E. *lovyeth* sg. and pl., *lovyere*). Of this generalization there is no trace in AB. There variation *ie/e* is still an inflexional variation accompanied by clear distinctions of sense.

[2] *eadmodieð* imper. pl. A 76/11. N reads (p. 278) *makieð eadmod & meokeð our heorte*. This has the support of alliteration, and A might be an accidental error for *eadmod* [*mak*]*ieð*. But in that case the error would be significant, since T and C have *eadmodieð*. More probable is a new formation direct from M.E. *eadmodi* humble. This, having *i* as part of the stem, would naturally follow the conjugation of *biburien* pl. *biburieð* (O.E. *bebyrgeað*), as did French verbs of similar form *chastien*, *studien*. Beyond *eadmode*[*de*] pa. t., *O.E. Hom.* i, p. 17, this is the only occurrence of this verb, and direct descent from O.E. *ēadmōdian* is doubtful.

[3] For instance *firsen*, *Juliene* 17, beside the normal *firsin* 'remove, abandon' of AB. But this should be *firren* (a synonym of *firsin*). There are a few cases of *s/r* confusion, but they are not necessary to explain this error. In these texts contamination of synonyms, always possible in copying and found frequently at all periods, is specially easy owing to the stylistic trick of using together two alliterative synonyms (often etymological variants like *folhin* and *fulien*). One of these (to the sense) unnecessary words was often dropped, or the two blended. An interesting case of contamination may here be noticed by the way, and as a warning to the seekers after occasional spellings: A 64/26 has *ofsaruet*, but this is *not* an early example of *er>ar*, but a contamination of *of-seruet* with *of-earnet*, both familiar words of identical sense (being different stages in the translation of *deservir*) in A and B.

out of about 1,000 instances only about 8 remain as certain 'exceptions' after examination (e.g. *blissen*, subj. *Katerine* 846, R. *blissin*). Whether these, out of the many hundreds of instances, are sufficient to make copying by a '*fonden*' scribe a necessary explanation, I leave to others to decide. Personally I have no doubt that if we could call the scribes of A and B before us and silently point to these forms, they would thank us, pick up a pen and immediately substitute the *-iñ* forms, as certainly as one of the present day would emend a minor aberration from standard spelling or accidence, if it was pointed to.

This is only a brief and inconclusive sketch of one item of the comparison between A and B, but I believe it offers some evidence suggesting, if not demonstrating, that A and B are uniquely related, and that the events in the textual history of each took place within less than a generation and round about A. D. 1225.

I append in illustration, and as a sample, a list of the verbs of the class discussed that have a recorded O.E. etymon, and also appear in AB in at least one of the special forms requiring *i* or *ie* by the rule mentioned above.

This list will serve not only as a sample of evidence for this 'sound-law', but also a fair sample of the unity of phonology and spelling of AB. I have recorded *every variation* of spelling in these lists that 2,355 instances (about) could provide. The forms presented are not my normalizations, but the standard forms of language (AB). The amount of variation is in fact exaggerated, since many of the recorded variations are very rare and probably accidental: e.g. *easkin* AB, 34 times, *eskest* in *Katerine*, once. [Certain regular alternations have been disregarded: e.g. *cu* for *ku* (*lokien*, *locunge*); *sce*, *sc* (*ȝiscen*, *ȝisceunge*).]

I. *fondin*-class. A and B: *blescin*, *blissin*, *bi-blodgin*, *chapin*, *cneolin*, *acou(e)rin* and *courin*, *adeadin*, ? *eadmodin*, *earnin* and *of-earnin*, *easkin* (*esk-*), *eilin*, *elnin*, *endin*, *erndin*, *euenin*, *falewin*, *feðerin* (fēðrian), *festnin*, (*uestnin*) and *unfestnin*, *firsin*, *folhin*, *fondin*, *fostrin*, *freinin* (? frægnian), *frourin*, *gederin*, *granin*, *grapin*, *grenin* (grēnian), *grennin*,

ȝarkin, ȝiscin, halsin, bi-he(a)fdin, heardin, hearmin, hercnin, hihin, hondlin, hongin and *ahongin, laðin, lechnin, leornin, likin* and *mislikin, limin* (līmian) and *unlimin, lokin* and *bi-lokin* and *luuelokin, milcin, muchlin* (*muclin*), *mun(e)gin, murðrin* and *amurðrin, nempnin, offrin, openin, pinin, reauin* and *bi-reauin, bi-reowsin, rikenin* (recenian), *saluin, schawin* (*shawin*), *smeðin, sorhin, sundrin, sun(e)gin, sutelin, tȳmbrin, tukin to wundre, ƿon(c)kin, ƿreatin, a-ƿrusmin, ƿurlin, wakenin* and *awakenin, walewin, wardin, warnin, wergin* (wērgian), *wilnin, windwin, wiuin, wohin, worin, wreastlin, wundin, wundrin* and *awundrin, wursin, wurðgin* (*wurdgin*), and *unwurðgin*. 96.

A only: *bemin* (bēmian), *birlin, blindfe(a)llin* (*blint-*), *borhin, bridlin, claðin, cleansin, clutin* and *bi-clutin, colin* and *acolin, druncnin, feattin, gnuddin* (O.E. gnuddian), *godin, greatin, heowin, herb(e)urhin, hungrin* and *ofhungret, huntin, meaðelin, neappin, se(c)clin, seowin, stoppin* and *forstoppin, bitacnin, teoheðin* (teogoƿian), *totin, or-trowin, ƿeostrin, winkin, wlispin*. 35. B only: *beddin, cleaterin, doskin, eardin, *ferkin* 'feed',[1] *hersumin, hoppin, leanin* (hlǣnian), *lickin, lutlin, medin* (mēdian), *motin, rarin, smirkin* (smercian), *stupin, teonin, wepnin, biwihelin, wondrin, wonnin* (wannian). 20.

II. *ƿolien*-class. A and B: *blikien, bodien, carien, cleopien* and *bi-cleopien, cwakien, cwikien* and *a-cwikien, fre(a)mien, gleadien, gremien, heatien, herien, forhohien, hopien, leaðien, liuuien* (and *libben*), *lutien* and *ed-lutien, luuuien* and *bi-luuuien, makien, munien* (and *munnen*), *ondswerien* (*ont-, on-*), *rotien* and *for-rotien, schapien, scheomien, schunien, slakien, smirien, spealien* (spelian), *spearien, sturien, swerien* (present stem only, remainder strong), *talien, temien, trukien, ƿeauien, ƿolien, wakien, werien* 'defend', *wonien, wreoðien, wunien*

[1] H 538 *feskin* and *foskin*. A sense 'swaddle'—impossible to etymologize—is given in the glossary. The alliterative grouping with *foskin* clearly points to O.E. *fercian*, which is chiefly recorded in senses 'provide for, provide with food', though this is the only case of the sense in M.E. There are other cases of *s/r* confusion (here aided by *fostrin*): e. g. *goder* = *godes*, God's, 710.

and *þurh-wunien* (and *inwuniende*). 46. A only: *druhien* and *a-druhien*, *for-druhien*, *fikien*, *ȝeonien*, *holien*, *leonien*, *notien* ('partake of', refl. 'be employed'[1]) and *mis-notien*, *prikien*, *schrapien*, *smeoðien* 'forge', *tilien*, *werien* 'wear' (and pp. pl. *for-werede*), *wleatien* 'nauseate'. 15. B only: *bęaðien*, *borien*, *dearien*, *gristbe(a)tien*, *leoðien* (liðian, lĕoðian), *readien* (aredian; see note). 6.

Here we have, counting separately verbs with and without a prefix, about 218 verbs: *fondin*-class 151, and the less numerous *þolien*-class (which contains none the less some very common verbs) 67. The number of occurrences of *i* or *ie* forms is about 1,081, of other forms about 1,274, in all about 2,355. The number of irregular forms not clearly due to misunderstanding of the context or other scribal accidents, and which are not consistently used in A and B, are about 6 in number. One or two, however, of the verbs here appearing in the *þolien*-class have been, or still are, credited with a long stem-vowel in O.E. I append a note on these cases: *lutien* (*edlutien*), *trukien*, (*a*)*druhien*, *wleatien*, *gristbeatien*, *readien*. O.E. *lĭtian* and *trŭcian* are now generally admitted on other evidence; the forms of AB should make *lūtian* and *trūcian* disappear finally. O.E. (*a*)*drugian* is still always printed with a long stem-vowel, but since the occurrences in metre are not decisive for this, and a short vowel is perfectly possible etymologically, we may assume with fair certainty *drŭgian*—it must be remembered that the evidence for the regular working of the rule in AB is in fact much greater in volume than even the large number of cases provided by inherited verbs. The long mark should also disappear (as now usually recognized) from O.E. *wlatian* and *wlætta*. Here we have the additional evidence of the regular AB *ea* for O.E. *ă* (dialectal *ea*) in open syllables, and of the rhyme in *The Owl and Nightingale* 854.

[1] A 46 v/17 *penne ha servið wel þe ancre hare leafdi, hwen ha notieð ham wel in hare sawle neode.* Here the clear and decisive forms of A put the meaning and construction beyond doubt, both of which are unclear in N (and the translation p. 178). Note the distinction between *notien* and *notin* 'note'.

readien has not, I believe, hitherto been allowed to be an O.E. verb or properly interpreted. It provides an example of the service to etymology of an analysis of AB. Its only occurrence is in *Sawles Warde* 81: *for þet ne mei na tunge tellen* (sc. *hwuch is helle*), *ah after þet ich mei & con þer towart ich chulle readien.* The sense 'discourse' proposed by Hall (*E.M.E.*.ii. 501, 511) does not fit *þer towart* at all, quite apart from the fact that the required etymology (a formation from *rǣd*) is against the present rule. O.E. *a-redian, ge-redian,* provides us with a satisfactory form (for the *ea* spelling cf. *freamien, spealien*), and *aredian (to)* 'find the way to, make one's way to' with a satisfactory sense—'according to my power and knowledge I will make an effort in that direction'.

gristbeatien is a more difficult case. In our texts it occurs only in *Jul.* pp. 67, 69, *gristbetede, gristbeatien* (R. *grispatede, grispatien*); for *A.R.* (N) p. 326 *gristbatede* A has *risede* 'trembled'. O.E. *gristbatian* is usually given *ā,* owing to the apparent etymological connexion with *bītan, grisbītian,* although such a vowel-grade in such a formation is abnormal. A shortening of the element *-bāt-*, either phonetically or under the influence of the synonymous *gristbitian,* before the M.E. development began, will probably be conceded, so that we need not consider this form as an isolated exception (supported as it is by R). My faith in the language of AB is possibly excessive, but I would go further and suggest that the O.E. word was *grisbatian* **gristbĕatian* and never had a long vowel. Shortening from *-bātian* is unlikely in view of the secondary accent that is required, and the clear apprehension of the composite nature of the word (shown in the B and Layamon spellings). A shortened form *-bătian* from *-bātian* would fit well enough as the antecedent of the forms outside B.[1] But the B forms do not fit. Reduction to an obscure vowel is in the nature of the case ruled out even for the form *gristbetede.* A

[1] In addition to those of R and N there occur: Layamon 1886 *gristbatinge,* and 5189 *gristbat,* possibly an error for the preceding; XI Pains of Hell 248 *gristbatynge of tepe*; *O.E. Hom.* i, p. 38 *waning and graming and toþen grisbating.*

variation 'AB *ea, e*—R and other texts *a*' points in all cases to O.E. *a* (Germanic *a* not a secondary shortening) in open syllables, as in the cases *gleadien, heatien, wleatien*, above. In this case, of course, the etymology of *gristbatian* is obscure. I suspect that it is a partial assimilation of some other word, by chance not recorded, to *gristbitian* (a purely English formation).[1]

J. R. R. TOLKIEN.

[1] **gristgramian*? Cf. O.H.G. *grisgramōn*, mod. German *Griesgram*; O.S. *gristgrimmo*. The *graming* and *grisbating* of the homily for the first Sunday in Lent may be a last trace of this and due to an older original. *Graming* occurs, I believe, nowhere else, and emendation to *granung* has been suggested; but the homily does not use *-ung*. Otherwise it has some forms closely allied to (AB): see above.

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